

Deputy Chief Ray Downey and Lieutenant Andy Fredericks ... As We Remember Them

You may be wondering why we're publishing this tribute almost six months after 9-11. Mostly, it's because this was and is so hard for us to write—we just couldn't bring ourselves to do it until now. It's still raw. We're still numb.

Ray and Andy—two of our very close advisors—were very important to us professionally. They spent a lot of time with the *Fire Engineering* staff, advising, reviewing article submissions, writing articles and scripts, shooting and editing videos, attending and instructing at conferences, and so on. They both were remarkably talented and knowledgeable firefighters—geniuses, actually: Ray, the cool-headed, seasoned commander with 30 years on the job and an awesome, hard-earned national profile; Andy, the intense and firematically passionate younger man who had recently gained national prominence for his brilliant work in fire attack methodologies and who was headed up the FDNY ladder of success.



Lieutenant Andy Fredericks

But it's personally that we're hit the hardest from losing them in the World Trade Center attack. It's hard to accept that Andy won't be walking through our office door to talk tactics with us, to brandish his dry, sarcastic wit—return fire for the good-natured swipes we took at him (after he made Squad 18 we started calling him "Squandy"). We talked for hours about the history of nozzles and fire attack, wrote and rewrote video scripts and 30-page articles that were as demanding as Andy was meticulous. His passion was evident in everything he did, and he did it all for the right reasons. If I had ever mentioned then that Andy was making fire service history, he would have just laughed at me and then resumed the conversation about why smooth-bore nozzles were the only choice for interior fire attack. He was driven to teach (for the Rockland County Fire Training Center; for the New York State Academy of Fire Science; and on the national level, including FDIC) and lay the groundwork for a better fire service. But that drive did not exceed his devotion to his family—

Michelle, his wife, and his children, Andrew and Haley.

It's equally as impossible to make ourselves believe that we can't call up Special Operations Command (SOC) for Ray anymore. It was remarkable to us that even as important and busy as Ray was, he always had time for us. We swapped stories about grandchildren and children, we laughed and joked about fire service characters we knew, and we teased him about his "computer under the helmet." He brought us to FDNY SOC, he filled us in on the latest with FEMA or the lessons from last night's big job in New York or about who the real fire service experts were and who was just blowing smoke. He was our mentor, our rescue guru, our friend. On the road, Ray always requested small, intimate dinners with "just the FE gang"—and what special times those were! He could have been out with "the hot shots," but that wasn't Ray—when he wasn't commanding a major rescue operation, he preferred the background. His modesty was as genuine as his God-given ability to lead in crises.

Ray and Andy were part of our family. It's very difficult to get rid of the feeling that each of them had so much more to give, but that's because they both gave so much and there's such a big hole now. They were change agents in the truest sense and made this world immeasurably better because they were who and what they were. This tribute can't fully convey what lies in our hearts for Ray and Andy, but we hope it shows the enduring faith we have that they live on. We hope this gives you a moment to reflect on the greatness in this business. That torch has been passed on to you, to us.

It is only a farewell on the physical level. My friends, they are always with us.

Bill Manning



Deputy Chief Ray Downey

A Tribute



When "God" was on the phone, you made sure to get rid of your other call. They called Ray that—"Rescue God," or just "God," for short. He commanded that level of respect from his Fire Department of New York personnel, from his seminar audiences, from his *Fire Engineering* readers and staff, and even from his family.

His son Joe, also a firefighter, tells of how mem-

bers called Joe "Jesus" when he first came on the job as an FDNY firefighter. When he asked why everyone was calling him Jesus, one firefighter replied, "You're the son of God, aren't you?" ■

To us in his fire service family, Ray's relationship with his beloved wife Rosalie was a match made in heaven (they celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in 2001 and have five children and nine grandchildren). Of course, when he was captain of FDNY Rescue Company 2, someone at *Fire Engineering* asked Ray if his wife called him "captain" at home. He replied, "Yeah, she tells me, 'Hey, Cap, take out the garbage.'" In fact, Ray was so humble that he didn't widely publicize his recent promotion to deputy

chief. Jim Ellison, a retired FDNY captain and Downey's right-hand man in SOC, relates that one day he walked into SOC to visit Downey and Downey was grinning from ear to ear. Ellison had to pry it out of him that Downey had been promoted. ■



In 1994, Ray was promoted to battalion chief and joined Special Operations Command (SOC) a year later. He became the head of SOC in 1997. In 1998, he pushed for the creation of special FDNY squad units with extra training in terrorism response, especially in preparation for the

new millennium. He was promoted to deputy chief this past August. Due in part to Ray's diligence, FDNY is one of the best equipped and most prepared fire departments in terrorism response in the world. ■

When asked how he was able to command complex operations so well, Ray jokingly said it was because he had stored a lot of information in his "computer under the helmet." He was a true, mild-mannered gentleman, but on the job he commanded the utmost respect from firefighters and officers alike. On the scene, Ray was in control. He had what's known as "command presence." In his eulogy at Ray's memorial service, a close fire department friend said he would never forget the image of Ray commanding operations from a tower ladder bucket extended over the water at the crash of TWA Flight 800. ■

Ray was a former Marine and the most decorated firefighter in FDNY history. He joined the department in 1962, serving with ladder and engine companies and Rescue 2 before forming Squad 1 in 1977. In 1980, he returned to Rescue 2 as captain, where he remained for 14 years. In 1988, he launched the popular column *The Rescue Company* in *Fire Engineering*, which not only coincided with his rise to national prominence in technical rescue operations (and which would become the basis for his book of the same name) but helped generate a wave of interest in the area of technical rescue that has continued to this day. ■

Some of the major incidents on the national and international level for which Ray served as rescue operations commander include the Philippines earthquake (1990), Hurricane Andrew (1992), the World Trade Center Bombing (1993), Hurricane Opal (1995), the Oklahoma City



In July 2001, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani held a dinner at Gracie Mansion in Downey's honor.

Bombing (1995), the Atlanta Olympics (1996), Hurricane Fran (1996), the Puerto Rico Humberto Vidal Explosion (1997), and the New York ice storms (1998). On the local level, incidents include the US Airways Flight 405 crash (1992), St. George Hotel fire (1995), TWA Flight 800 crash (1996), the 31st Street building collapse (1998), the Times Square scaffolding collapse (1998), the Bronx garage collapse (2000), the Father's Day fire (2001), and the State Street Gas Explosion (2002). ■

Ray was the USAR task force leaders representative to FEMA for all 28 USAR teams and served on the FEMA



Ray said his father was the one who sparked his interest in firefighting. But his passion for fire attack methodologies in particular was triggered after he received steam burns while making an interior "combination" fire attack with a fog nozzle, as was typical procedure for the Virginia fire department Andy worked for at the time, prior to his getting on the job in New York. He turned his serious intellectual skills (evidenced in part by his two bachelor's degrees and master's degree in fire protection management) to the application of water on interior fires and soon would develop the nickname "Andy Nozzles." ■



Incident Support Team (IST), the advance team that manages federal emergency responses. He spent a great amount of time—including a lot of personal time—making the USAR teams better prepared, trained, and equipped. He was known worldwide as the leading authority on responses to both manmade and natural catastrophic events. For years, Ray had been warning the fire service community and the federal government that, with respect to a major terrorism incident on U.S. soil, "It's not a question of if, but when." In fact, Ray served on the Gilmore Commission, a congressional advisory panel that issued a report last year entitled "Toward a National Strategy for Combating Terrorism." ■

Downey would have been 64 on September 19, 2001. He was due to retire this year but wanted to stay on in hopes that his son Joe would be made chief. They would have been FDNY's first father-son chiefs. ■

Ray's dedication to training was evident: In between responding to disasters worldwide, training FEMA teams, testifying before Congress, and spending time with his family, he always found time to teach at FDIC and FDIC West. ■



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Andy's initiation to the national firefighting stage was an auspicious start. His first work for *Fire Engineering*, "Return of the Solid Stream," was published in 1995 as part of a three-article package called "Fighting Fire with Water." The other two articles in the package were written by none other than William E. Clark and Keith Royer, two giants in fire service history and firefighting methods. For Andy, this was a harbinger of greatness to come. Though Andy's life was cut short as he was nearing the height of his career, in six short years he established himself as an industry giant in his own right. ■



In 2000, Andy delivered a riveting keynote speech, "Don't Worry 'bout that Nozzle, Kid, 'cause We Don't Do Fires Anymore," at the Fire Department Instructors Conference Opening Ceremony. "Firefighting today still remains largely a gritty, up-close, personal affair using tactics and techniques that date

back decades," he said. "Even in the high-tech battlefield of today, it is the soldier with the rifle who still makes the difference in wartime. So until we make greater strides in the fire prevention and fixed suppression arenas, the firefighter and his nozzle will continue to be the difference between life and death for literally thousands of Americans threatened by fire every year." ■



"Topic and me, am I old school?" Andy said, though he entered the fire service as a volunteer in 1979 and was only 40 years old at the time of his death. "I guess in many ways I am, because I truly believe that tradition is important to the long-term survival of the fire service." ■

The three videos Andy developed for Fire Engineering, *Advancing the Initial Attack Handline* (1997), *Stretching the Initial Attack Handline* (1998), and *Methods of Structure Fire Attack* (1999),



inarguably are the finest and most comprehensive works ever developed on engine work in the video training genre. But Andy's brilliance showed through in all types of training venues, be it at the podium, on the training ground, in print, or on video. He was working on a book on engine company operations, which he saw as the culmination of his life's work to date, at the time of his untimely death at the World Trade Center. ■



His opinions truly were deep-rooted—and he was not shy about expressing them. "To me, the fire service is still dirty hose and brass nozzle tips, seasoned firefighters who know what it means to pull a ceiling and know what to do when they're told to trim a window ... and it's about chiefs who trust their instincts and exude that command presence," he said. ■

He had made the decision to get back to his roots and was seeking a detail back to the engine company. ■

"I view the two-in/two-out rule as a copout standard," he opined to a broad national audience, with searing logic that was a Frederick's trademark. "When the two who are in are in trouble, what are the two who are out going to be able to do? My experience is that it may take a half dozen or more firefighters ... to rescue just one firefighter in distress To me, the safest way to operate if there are only four personnel available for interior firefighting, I think, is all four in. And the reason is that the search for victims will be completed much more quickly, but most important, water will be applied to the seat of the fire in a shorter time frame, which eliminates all the hazards the two-in/two-out rule was created to address in the first place." ■

Andy had a reputation for being a devoted family man. There was one time when a deadline for writing one of his video scripts was fast approaching. When he was called and reminded to get his video script finished, his wife picked up the other phone extension and chimed in, "As soon as he paints our kitchen cabinets he can finish the script!" He painted those cabinets. ■