

## **Press Release**

### **July 2022**

## **MU Extension Alumni Receive National Fire Heritage Center Ben Franklin Writer's Award**

Two past Directors of the University of Missouri Extension's Fire and Rescue Training Institute (MU FRTI) have been awarded the National Fire Heritage Center's *2022 Benjamin Franklin Writer's Silver Award* for outstanding contribution to preserving the written history of America's Fire Service. Past MU FRTI Directors David E. Hedrick and Kevin D. Zumwalt teamed with Ken Willette, Executive Director of the North American Fire Training Directors (NAFTD), to research and author the *NAFTD 2021 Administrative Survey Report* on United States and Canadian Fire Training Systems.

David Hedrick served as MU FRTI's Director from 2007 until his retirement in 2017. Hedrick has been involved in fire and emergency services for over 40 years, beginning his career as a Firefighter/EMT. He is the former Director of Fire Service Training with the Tennessee Fire & Codes Academy, and a former Assistant Director at the LSU Fireman Training Program. He was elected Vice President of the NAFTD, and served two terms from 2009 to 2013. Hedrick was inducted into the National Fire Heritage Center (NFHC) Hall of Legends, Legacies, and Leaders (HLLL) in 2018.

Kevin Zumwalt began his fire service career as a volunteer with the St. Clair (MO) Fire Protection District in 1975, and later served with the Mehlville Fire Protection District in St. Louis County. He began working with MU FRTI in 1984 as a part-time instructor and then Coordinator for the Winter and Summer Fire Schools. He became a full time Specialist in 1994 with Extension. He was promoted to MU FRTI Associate Director in 2013 and then to Director in 2018, serving until his retirement in 2020. Zumwalt also served at the national level as the State Co-Chair of the National Fire Academy Training Resource and Data Exchange during his tenure.

MU FRTI, a premier unit of MU Extension, has an 89 year history of serving the training and educational needs of Missouri's firefighters and emergency service first responders, along with students from across the United States. The NAFTD is an international organization that promotes the common interests of providing quality fire training and education for firefighters, and is comprised of State Fire Training Directors of each of the fifty states and all Canadian provinces and territories.

One of The National Fire Heritage Center's purposes is to help preserve the history of America's time-honored fire service. Currently the archive library has over 15,000 cataloged documents which serve as major historical value. Benjamin Franklin, the father of America's Fire Service, left a vast legacy of literary works. He encouraged writers to "go on record" as to their beliefs, observations, and support of public and private initiatives. Through the Benjamin Franklin Fire Writer's Award, the National Fire Heritage Center encourages today's fire service writers to continue the tradition.

The NFHC 2022 Benjamin Franklin Writers Award recognizes Gold, Silver, and Bronze winners for their contributions to preserving diverse aspects of America's Fire Services. The winners for 2022 were:

Gold winner was Harvey Eisner: WTC In Their Own Words.

**Silver winners** were Ronny J. Coleman: Alpha to Omega, Ken Willette/David Hedrick/Kevin Zumwalt: Fire Training Directors Survey Report, and Keith Seafeld/Michael Pack: History of the Chicago Fire Brigade.

Bronze winners included Elliot Paisner: Dr. John L. Bryan: Pioneer and Professor in Fire Protection Engineering Article, Collen Morton Busch: Fire Monks, and Rodney Slaughter: Tradition and Progress: California Fire Technology Directors' Beliefs and Values.

For more information on the NFHC and the Benjamin Franklin Writers Award contact:

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