

# The *For Survivors of Fallen Firefighters* Journey

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## HOW HAVE YOU REMEMBERED YOUR FIREFIGHTER?

**T**he Foundation encourages departments and communities to pay tribute to fallen firefighters. It can be so comforting to have visible proof that a loved one's service was

valued and that their sacrifice will be remembered. Firefighters are often honored with building dedications, monuments, special displays, and memorial events.

But there are also the private remembrances of those who knew and loved the firefighter best. Many survivors find that creating a special tribute gives their grief direction and brings a sense of comfort.

*Here are some stories that you have shared with us about how you have remembered your firefighters.*

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### Monuments and Dedications

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*Our family decided to build a memorial in Kenny's honor. We sold bricks and gathered enough money to build a brick wall at the fire department, topped by a huge marble Maltese cross. Now the great-grandchildren have been told all about it so*

*they will also be able to know Kenny.* Grandmother 1992

*I have created the most beautiful stone on Brian's grave that any firefighter would be proud of. This was my last gift to him. It has the firehouse, rigs, his helmet, a Maltese cross, his number, and many other personalized items. It is decorated faithfully every single season as my remembrance to him.* Wife 1997

*When Billy was killed, we set up a fund in his memory to go toward building a new fire hall. Billy was also a member of the emergency squad, and they dedicated their new building to him.* Mother 1996

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### Scholarships

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*My husband and I established a scholarship for fire sciences in Eric's memory at our local community college. Each year we participate in the award ceremonies and presentation. I have the satisfaction of knowing that we are helping other young people to pursue their dream in a career my son loved and excelled in.* Mother 1998

*I created a scholarship in my husband's and son's names to be presented each year to a graduating high school senior who has been active in a fire department or ambulance corps. I choose the recipient and present the scholarship.* Wife 1996



Would you like to share your stories and memories with other fire service survivors through *The Journey*? If you would like to be involved in this project, please contact [Linda Hurley](mailto:Linda.Hurley@erols.com) at [l.hurley@erols.com](mailto:l.hurley@erols.com) or by calling the Foundation.

*The Journey* • National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
P.O. Drawer 498, Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
(301) 447-1365 [firehero@erols.com](mailto:firehero@erols.com)

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## Memorial Events

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My youngest brother has organized a memorial softball tournament each spring, with the proceeds going to several charitable organizations that our brother supported. Sister 1999

Pip loved the outdoors, and we do family trips to honor his love for hiking and camping. Mother 2000

There is a rugby tournament named for Butch and an annual fishing derby named for the two firefighters who died in that incident. Wife 1982

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## Jewelry

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My father had charm replicas and copies of Vin's badge made and gave them to my mother, all of the siblings and their spouses, and my brother's wife and daughters. It became one of everyone's most cherished possessions. Sister 1999

Tom and I had always planned to give our children a promise ring when they turned 16. For my daughter's 16th birthday last July, I took her to an upscale restaurant and presented the

ring to her over dinner. The ring is a replica of Tom's badge, and a quick glance at the badge is a constant reminder of the special love that her daddy had for her. Wife 1999



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## Remembrance Services

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The memorial and funeral were beautiful, but because of the magnitude of the services, I did not feel I had especially participated. On the first anniversary of his death, I had a private remembrance service at my parish. I planned and organized it myself; chose the prayers, poems, and music; and invited family and close friends. It was a very personal remembrance of my son, and it finally gave me the closure I had not known I needed. Mother 1998

In my husband's obituary, I asked that donations be made to the firehouse. Some of that money was used to have a flag pole erected at the site of the crash. The land and concrete were donated in memory of Brian. On the first year anniversary, at the exact time Brian's arrival was announced in Heaven, we had a very moving ceremony at the crash site. Wife 1997

On Bryan's first birthday after his death, my son and his wife held a birthday party for him. His crew and closest friends were invited. We were not sure how it would go, but it was a good, healing occasion. We each shared a story about Bryan and laughed a lot. We served his favorite foods, which were Doritos and Peanut-Buster Parfait Sundaes. Bryan was always into volunteering at the station and city hall with kids' events, so we had balloons for the children to take home in his memory. Mother 1999

Each year near the anniversary of his death, I have a Mass said and invite firefighters, family, and friends back to the house for lunch. I feel that remembering should be a happy thing. I think that's what he would want. Wife 1982

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## Albums and Photographs

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I have a shadow box made up with firefighter turnouts and other memorabilia and a picture of both firefighters. Mother 1998

My daughter-in-law has put together an album of Pip's life. She included a lot of pictures and things the family and friends remembered. We included a lot of pictures Pip had taken while working with the Park Service. Family members and friends were presented with an album at Christmas. We also sent one to our son's chief, and he is sharing it with the firefighters. Mother 2000

I made buttons with my brother's picture on them and his name, title, and dates. Our immediate family wore them to the memorials, and I made quite a number of them for his friends and fellow firefighters. Sister 1999

I am starting a scrapbook about my father's life—his childhood, the Army, being a firefighter, and his family. I think it is important for the future generations of the family to see the wonderful person he was. Daughter 1999