

David Theisen and Stephen Carletti Memorial Highway

Testimony

This testimony is to give you all some insight on the tragedy that took place on February 5, 1998 at 0210 hours when the Crooksville Volunteer Fire Department lost 2 of its members in a residential structure fire. These members were David Theisen and Stephen Carletti. David was not only a Volunteer Firefighter he was a Career Firefighter with the Westerville Division of Fire. David was only 29 years old when he perished in this fire. Stephen was a Volunteer Firefighter and was 43 years of age when he perished.

During this fire while conducting a routine search of the residence to ensure there was no one trapped inside, David and Stephen as well as others located fire in the basement during this search. This fire was in the ceiling and as they began to start to extinguish the fire. While moving around the basement with their attack line to continue to extinguish the fire the attack line had gotten pinched in a folding chair that had collapsed on it cutting off the water supply. At this moment, the firefighters in the basement had no idea that their supply had been cut off. As they began to pull additional ceiling tiles a flashover occurred. What they did not know was that a room they had not found yet that was adjacent from their location was fully involved and fire had moved up into the ceiling and spread into the other rooms and when they pulled the tiles the flashover occurred. Repeated calls for water and help went out over the radio but due to the attack line being pinched off they did not get the water and due to the intense heat, those who were rushing to try and save them was unable to get there. Two of the other firefighters in the basement were able to escape and another was rescued. David and Stephen however did not make it out.

The impact that these fatalities had on our communities were catastrophic. Even though I was a young boy when this happened, my Uncle Roseville Fire Chief Derrick Keylor and Friend Asst. Chief Ed Guy were 2 of the firefighters attempting to get to David and Stephen in this fire. They attempted every point of entry they could, but the heat was too intense, and they were not able to get to them. My father Travis Keylor was the Perry County Sheriff's Office Captain who had to assist with the investigation and listen to the radio traffic of this horrific incident. Travis was also a Captain with Roseville Volunteer Fire Department and was friends with David and Stephen. So, growing up I had heard many stories about both David and Stephen and to hear how great these men were is an understatement they were the best of the best. These men sacrificed everything to try and save someone's home they that did not know but knew that they had a job to do that morning and it was to do what they could to save that home. This incident drove me to become a firefighter and to honor these men who are the definition of true Volunteer Firefighters and Heros.

The memory of David and Stephen I believe should be honored with this Memorial Highway for their dedication and ultimate sacrifice and to show that we still remember and honor them. I have spoken with the families and they are very supportive of this and would be thankful to see this Memorial Highway in place. So, I ask that you pass this legislation and allow our small town to honor 2 "Hometown Heros".

Thank You.

Lt. Zach Keylor

Roseville Volunteer Fire Department.