

Columbus Firefighters Memorial Renovation Project

Memorial History

On the night of February 19, 1936 a raging fire at the old I.O.O.F. Hall at 198 S. High St. claimed the lives of two Columbus Fire Captains, one Lieutenant, and two Firefighters. Two other Firefighters were seriously injured and consequently retired from the department.

From the ashes of that tragic fire arose a dream.....the dream of a memorial honoring all firefighters who answered their Last Alarm. The dream grew slowly and in 1957 came closer to reality as Fire Chief Walter Strickfaden commissioned FF Joe Pishitelli to be project coordinator for the construction of a Firefighters Memorial. Land was aquired through City Council ordinance and Lieutenant Ed Nothacker was selected to design the Memorial. On November 30, 1957, ground was broken at Marconi Boulevard and Gay Street, and the Firefighter Memorial became more than just a dream.

Using only private funds, Nothacker and Pishitelli worked tiredly to coordinate construction of the Memorial, with nearly all labor donated by firefighters. The Memorial was anchored by four- twelve footed fluted limestone columns on a six and one-half foot base. A bronze tower bell from a former Columbus Firehouse was hung between the columns, and a bronze Maltese Cross was placed at the top of the Memorial on each of its four sides. Those crosses, as well as the Memorial's plaques, were cast from melted firehouse bells.



On April 13, 1958, less than five months after the ground breaking, the memorial was dedicated by Mayor M. E. Sensenbrenner. A thirty foot aluminum flag pole on a terrazzo base was added in 1965, and during the summer of 1988 firefighters completed a major renovation project. Under the guiding hand of Captain Jim Ross, the original Memorial was refurbished, four matching stone benches were placed around the perimeter of the monument and the grounds were re-landscaped. The funds, materials and labor were provided by members of the Columbus Division of Fire and the Central Ohio community. A black granite monument was added to the site, engraved with the names of all Columbus firefighters who have died in the line of duty. On October 16, 1968, the Firefighters Memorial was re-dedicated with the solemn lighting of the new Eternal Flame.

