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Former Chief Bills Remembered for Fire Service Innovation

DELAWARE – Former City of Delaware Fire Chief Wilbur Bills died Saturday, February 20 in Delaware.

Bills, 89, served as Chief for 23 years, from 1957 to 1980 – the longest tenure of any Delaware Fire Chief. Bills had a total of 32 years of service with the department.

“It is with great sadness that the Delaware Fire Department announces his passing,” Chief John Donahue said. “There was not a day in his life that Chief Bills was not associated with our department.”

Bills was born September 25, 1926, the son of a Delaware City Firefighter and future Fire Chief, Fred Bills. He entered service as a firefighter in 1948 and retired in 1980 after serving as Chief.

During his distinguished career Chief Bills was known as a progressive thinker and innovator, overseeing many improvements in how fire service is provided to Delaware residents. He emphasized fire safety for his crews, instituted paramedic staffed ambulances, and the building of Fire Station 301, at 99 South Liberty Street, which bears his name. He also served as President of the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association and was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for his service.

“Chief Bills remained active with our department even after his retirement and his presence will be sorely missed,” Donahue said.

Visitation is Tuesday, 2-4 pm and 6-8 pm at Robinson Funeral Home, 32 West Winter Street, Delaware. A funeral mass is Wednesday at 10 am at St. Mary Catholic Church, Delaware, with burial to follow at St. Mary Cemetery, 334 S. Sandusky St.

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