

The annual Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association's Awards Ceremony was held on Monday, April 20th at Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company Social Hall. The recipients for 2025 are:

The **Clint Hughes Departmental Fire Prevention Award** was presented to Junior Fire Company for its year-long efforts to inform the Frederick County community about fire prevention and life safety.

Assistant Chief Kristi Staley of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company received the **James H. Stavelly III Fire Prevention Award** for her efforts promoting fire prevention and life safety to the Walkersville community by posting tips and information on social media. She coordinates events with the local schools to share fire prevention and safety information with children. She organizes fun events so children get comfortable with firefighters, EMTs and their equipment, as well as enhancing their knowledge of fire prevention and life safety skills.

The **Louise Lenhart Auxiliary Encouragement Award** was presented to Lee Schipper of the Auxiliary of the Middletown Volunteer Fire Company which she joined in March 2020. She can always be counted on helping with the fundraising activities of the auxiliary showing a talent for making pie dough. She is an inspiration and role model for anyone who wants to contribute in a positive way to the fire service and their community.

Barbara Gladhill of the Auxiliary of the Middletown Volunteer Fire Company earned the **Cletta Abrecht Auxiliary Member of the Year** for 2025. She participated on many of the fundraising committees showing up for each event for setup and staying through for cleanup.

Winona "Winnie" Crum Rookie of the Year is awarded to an individual who has less than two years of service with a fire and/or rescue company. Riley Smith of the Urbana Volunteer Fire Department is in his second year in the Fire and Rescue internship with Frederick County Public School. During his after-school hours, he enrolled in EMT class which he completed and passed the National Registry test on his first attempt. He helps at fundraising events when he is not working his parttime job.

The **Charles "Mutt" Deater, Jr. Apprentice of the Year** is given to a member who is under the age of 18. This year's recipient is Anna Wilson of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company. She works the weekly bingos and annual carnival in July. Anna is extremely helpful in the community outreach events including Open House and Trunk-or-Treat for Halloween. She successfully completed Hazardous Materials Operations and is currently enrolled in Firefighter 1 class.

The **Everett W. Gaver Department/Church/Community Service Award** was presented to Patricia "Pat" Haines-Riggs of the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company. She served as Chaplain, Secretary and is currently President of the Auxiliary. Pat is a long-time member of Mt. Tabor Church currently serving as Treasurer and leads the adult Sunday School. She is secretary of the Community Park board which is responsible for the upkeep of the park and the 40 ft wooden sliding board.

Penny Stonesifer of the Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company was the recipient for the **Robert L. Renner Departmental Service Award**. Penny is currently Secretary of the fire company. She chairs several committees and participates in many more. Penny and her husband are chair of the Fundraising committee where they restarted monthly bingos and initiated new ones such as the BBQ chicken drive thru. She took responsibility for replacing the outside sign and currently updates it regularly.

The **Mumma Outstanding Service Award** was presented to Dennis McGrew of Urbana Volunteer Fire Department and Urbana Volunteer Rescue Squad. Dennis currently serves as president, a position he has held for the past 10 years. He has skillfully managed the responsibilities of the office, ensuring a well-organized, financially stable and efficiently run fire department. He has supervised major capital improvements. He chairs the Kitchen and Dining Room committees as well as the Carnival committee, the department's major fundraiser. Through his leadership, vision and tireless work ethic, he has significantly strengthened the operational effectiveness, financial security and community relationships of the department.

Deputy Chief Mark Flook of Jefferson Volunteer Fire Company earned the **Milliard M. "Mick" Mastrino Instructor/Safety Award** for 2025. Mark assumed the responsibility of ensuring all operational members were competent firefighters and EMS responders. He established routine station drills and worked with DFRS for a doll house fire growth drill, using new thermal equipment to learn the strengths and weaknesses of these devices. Mark worked with junk yards to acquire cars for extrication drills. He reached out to Loudon County Virginia Fire department providing an opportunity to attend a drill at Loudon's flashover simulator. He encourages and tutor members enrolled in classes.

Firefighters and EMTs need to continually train to learn new skills and refresh seldom used ones to maintain proficiency through participation in formal training as well as station drills. The **Fire/Rescue Department Training Award** was earned from July 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025 by the following companies:

1st Place	Brunswick Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Company - 85 hours per volunteer
2nd Place	New Market District Volunteer Fire Company – 84 hours per volunteer
3rd Place	United Steam Fire Engine Company – 56 hours per volunteer

The **Firefighter of the Year** is Josh Ogongi of United Steam Fire Engine Company #3. Josh is the department's top responder for 2025 responding to 197 emergency calls. He has a good relationship with the career staff and is regularly part of a 24-hour shift assignment. Josh completed the Emergency Medical Technician advancing his skill set and broadening his capacity to deliver quality patient care. He actively supports departmental initiatives, contributes to company functions and upholds the standards and traditions that sustain morale and unity.

The **Firefighter Medal of Valor** was presented to four men, who without protective gear, entered a smoke-filled home searching for and rescuing an elderly woman. Assistant Chief Patrick Stevens and Lieutenant Luke Stevens of Middletown Volunteer Fire Company responded from home without protective gear and Tech James Harner of DFRS also responded from his home across the street from the incident. These three men entered the smoke home looking for the person calling for help. Captain Wilby, career firefighter stationed at Middletown Volunteer Fire Company, arrived on scene and immediately entered the smoke-filled house. Tech Harner and Captain Wilby located the victim and carried her out the front door. Tech Harner stayed with the patient until the ambulance arrived and the other three firefighters returned to their crew to extinguish the fire.

The **Outstanding Unit Award** was presented to New Market District Volunteer Fire Company and Libertytown Volunteer Fire Department in recognition of extraordinary teamwork, professionalism and skill under adverse conditions. On May 25, 2025, units were dispatched with volunteer and career personnel for MVA @ I-70 and Bartholows Road involving a Box Truck and a Tractor Trailer reported to be on fire with entrapment and an ejection. With both stations working as a team, this incident was mitigated with the utmost professionalism. Personnel worked on the scene for 8+ hours, extinguishing fire, controlling HazMat materials, blocking traffic and providing emergency medical services.

The **Dr. James Marrone EMS Member of the Year** was presented to Robert "Rob" Abramowitz for his outstanding clinical skill, tireless volunteer service, mentorship of new members and selfless dedication to both his colleagues and the community. As a graduate of Northeastern University's paramedic program and a U.S. Army veteran, he joined Urbana Volunteer Fire Department and Urbana Rescue Volunteer Rescue Squad with all the training needed to respond to emergency calls. Rob has remained deeply committed to patient care and public service through his dedicated volunteer service with UVFD's "C" shift. During his furlough from his job with the federal government, Rob reported for 14 consecutive 24 hour "C" shifts totaling 336 hours during which he responded to 156 ambulance calls. He was instrumental in advancing EMS education within the station. He served as a regional Career and Technology Education judge for the CPR category. As chairman of the Membership committee, Rob continues to mentor and guide new volunteers. The members trust and respect Rob for his dedication to the station and the community.

Fire Chief Brendan Beaton of United Steam Fire Engine Company #3 was presented the **Michael Wilcom Officer of the Year Award**. Chief Beaton provided disciplined, forward-thinking leadership while maintaining a firm commitment to core traditions of the fire service. Chief Beaton maintained a visible and consistent presence at incidents, trainings and company functions, setting expectations through personal example. His command at emergency scenes reflects sound judgement, calm decision-making and an unwavering focus on firefighter safety and effective incident resolution. Under Chief Beaton's direction, emergency response operations have remained organized, decisive and mission-focused, reinforcing public trust and internal confidence in his leadership. He fulfilled all annual Command Competency requirements attending required training sessions and participating in skill scenarios. He has demonstrated a strong commitment to officer development and succession planning.

The **Bruce L. Reeder, Sr. "Golden" Service Award** is given to a volunteer with 50 years of active service in one or more Frederick County fire, rescue, or ambulance companies. This award was presented to Bernard R. Wivell of Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company #13. Bernard is 92 years old and has been an active volunteer for 53 years and still going. He was elected Treasurer in 1977, and 48 years later he still holds that position. He is very active in all aspects of fundraising and has chaired and worked on various decisive committees which include playing a large part in the annual fund drive, collecting money at the monthly bingo and he would not miss a night at the annual carnival. As treasurer, Bernard is responsible for the financial viability of the company and its ability to cover operating expenses and planning for future expenditures for equipment and station maintenance. He has received multiple company awards, been inducted into the FCFVRA Hall of Fame and the community service award was presented to him by the Emmitsburg-Thurmont Community Show Board. Bernard is a man of outstanding character and genuine integrity who is respected and loved by the members of Rocky Ridge VFC.

The **Heart of a Volunteer Award** is given to honor those whom when faced with Enormous Personal Challenges continue to give their all to serve his/her company. Roberta Simmons of Brunswick Volunteer Fire Company has demonstrated service is not motivated by recognition, but by genuine care for her community and fellow volunteers. Roberta has consistently gone above and beyond, quietly ensuring that the behind the scenes work that sustains volunteer organizations is done with care, commitment and excellence. She served as President of the Auxiliary for 8 years, Secretary and Chair of the LOSAP program for the fire company. Roberta has demonstrated strong organizational leadership, attention to detail and a deep concern for the well-being and recognition of fellow volunteers. She currently serves on the fire company's Board of Directors. She suffered a heart attack and brain aneurysm in 2021 and has continued to have health issues. These challenges only slowed her down a little. She continued her presence, commitment and willingness to serve wherever needed reflects a deep sense of purpose and an unbreakable connection to the volunteer fire and rescue service mission.

The inductees to the Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association's Hall of Fame are dedicated volunteers who have served their company or auxiliary in an operational or administrative capacity for at least 25 years. Many are continuing to volunteer for the betterment of their company. Each inductee has distinguished himself or herself in the form of leadership or creative participation that significantly impacts and advances the fire and rescue service or auxiliary. Inductees for 2025 are:

- Chad Barrick of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company
- James Click of Vigilant Hose Company
- Richard Gilbert of Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company
- Dwight Koogle of Middletown Volunteer Fire Company
- R. Wayne Powell of Vigilant Hose Company
- Timothy Shelton of Junior Fire Company
- Jim Snyder of Libertytown Volunteer Fire Department