
IN MEMORIUM



It is with regret that we announce the death of former Ottawa International Airport (Canada) Fire Chief Pierre Surprenant, 51, which occurred on August 3rd.

A former Canadian Forces firefighter, Pierre served as the airport fire chief for 13 years at Ottawa International Airport. Although Pierre had recently retired from active ARFF firefighting, he never lost his passion for the firefighting profession, especially teaching. He had started teaching this year at a firefighting school in Mirabel, Quebec. Pierre was one of the founding members of the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation (CFFF) and had served for several years on its board of directors.

Pierre is survived by three children -- Simon, 20, Pierre-Marc, 22, and Dominique, 24.

Georges Potvin was one of Mr. Surprenant's closest friends. He also travelled to Syracuse to attend the gathering.

"This was just a stupid accident to happen," Mr. Potvin said in frustration.

Mr. Surprenant was heading home to the Montreal area alone because Mr. Potvin and other friends were heading toward Gatineau. He said Mr. Surprenant called him on his cellphone just 15 minutes before the accident to ask if he could help him with his flat tire. "He called us up and we were almost already home, so we couldn't do very much for him."

Mr. Potvin didn't receive word of Mr. Surprenant's death until about 2 a.m.

Mr. Potvin said he befriended Mr. Surprenant in 2000 when he sold him a raffle ticket that eventually won

the grand prize at a Bytown Fire Brigade fundraiser. The prize was an antique fire chief's car from 1909, which piqued Mr. Surprenant's interest in firefighting history and inspired him to collect more. Mr. Potvin said Mr. Surprenant had collected four antique firefighting vehicles in all, and he was looking forward to showing them off at the Bytown Fire Brigade's 25th anniversary next month.

"He just loved it so much," Mr. Potvin said about Mr. Surprenant's interest in firefighting history, adding that the latter was also a member of Gatineau's firefighters historical society.

"He was one of those jovial kind of guys," he said. "Always happy, ready to help. That kind of fellow."

Mr. Potvin said Mr. Surprenant had been the fire chief at Ottawa's International Airport for about 13 years and before that worked various firefighter positions in Canada's military services.

Will Brooks, past-president of the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation, said Mr. Surprenant was working to restore the large vehicle, a 1960 Pierre Thibault Ltd. ladder truck. He was towing a 1909 Model T Ford, dressed as a chief's car, that had once been owned by the Bytown Fire Brigade.

"He was very excited about the weekend, because it was the first time he'd shown the vehicle outside Quebec," Mr. Brooks said.

Mr. Surprenant leaves behind three sons: Dominique, 24, Pierre-Marc, 22, and Simon, 20, and he was predeceased by his stepson Miguel Charlebois, 22, who was killed in a car accident two years ago.

WORLD CLASS FIRE TENDER COMMISSIONED AT NEVIS AIRPORT

CHARLESTOWN, Nevis - Premier of Nevis and Minister of Finance in the Nevis Island Administration (NIA) Joseph Parry, received the keys and cut the ribbon to commission a top of the line US\$575,000, 2008 E-One Titan 6x6 Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting appliance on August 14, 2008 at the Airport at Newcastle.

The event signaled the increased operating standard of the traveling facility to the new level 8, up from level 5.

"I am very happy this afternoon to stand here before you with this truck in the background. It is a brand new truck which has been brought here by the Nevis Island Administration...We decided to spend the money, we decided we wanted to have a truck to bring the services up to grade five so that the airport can be