

Year of the Finn

■ LAFD honors Club Member Capt. James Finn as Firefighters of the Year. Fighters Memorial is his passion.

Story by Bev Haro, Club Counselor
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FIRE DEPT. — Capt. James Finn was honored as the LAFD Firefighter of the Year at the Department's 38th annual Luncheon, held April 15 at the Omni Hotel. The award, honoring Capt. Finn for his 37 years of dedicated service, is sponsored by the Los Angeles City Firefighters Association.

Captain I Finn, a new Club Member, was nominated by Mark Ryan, a Staff Assistant. Mark had to know the Captain for only five years to find out why James Finn is worthy of the esteemed award. Mark and his fellow firefighters surprised Captain Finn with a brand new television.

Gary Johnson, President of the Firefighters Association, was the Master of Ceremonies. Councilman Dennis Zine and Councilman Tom LaBonge attended the event along with LAFD Chief William Bammatre. Members of Captain Finn's family, including his wife, Jeannie; daughter,

Jennifer; and brother, Bill; were also present. Several past recipients of the award were also present. In fact, two of them attended elementary school with Captain Finn.

Capt. Finn is a lifelong resident of Los Angeles. He spent six years in the Marine Corps, achieving the title of Staff Sergeant. He joined the LAFD in February 1968. He married his high school sweetheart, Jeannie, and has been married for 35 years. They have one daughter, Jennifer.

Capt. Finn has volunteered countless community service hours to various causes. He was an LAFD mentor for children at risk. In 2004 he was chosen as the volunteer of the year for the LAFD historical society. On Saturdays you can usually find him working at the LAFD museum, unless of course he's working at Fire Station 29. He has spent more than 600 hours researching and compiling accurate information on Fallen Firefighters for the memorial.

He acknowledges that the Fallen Firefighters Memorial is his passion. He is involved with Friends of Fire Station 29. When Captain Finn spoke, he encouraged everyone to choose one of the many great organizations available and volunteer.



Gary Johnson, President, L.A. City Firefighter's Association, presents the Firefighter of the Year award.



From left: LAFD Chief William Bammatre with Capt. Jim Finn.



From left: Captain Al Abarca, 27 years, with Marie Abarca.



Tom LaBonge presents bread to Capt. Finn.



From left: Engineer Dan Zabala, FS 29C, 11 years, with David Stroud, Engineer.



Mark Ryan, Staff Assistant, FS 29, Battalion 11, 15 years, with Shannon Ryan.



Capt. James Finn receives an award from Fire Station 29.



Dana Laine, Retired Captain, 26 years, with Norma Laine, Retired Chief of Operations, Department of Airports, 36 years.



From left: Battalion Chief Thomas, 25 years, with Battalion Chief Yoder, 32 years.



Roger DeFeo congratulates Capt. Finn.



Firefighters of Fire Station 29 and Capt. Finn and family join in for group photo with the Captain's new television.



From left: Ralph Terrazas, Battalion Chief; Lydia Luna, Sr. Clerk Typist; Elizabeth De Anda, Clerk Typist, 25 years; and Captain Carlos Calvillo.



Kevin Nida, President, L.A. State Firefighter's Association, presents Capt. Finn with an award.



The Finns: Jeannie, Jim and Jennifer.



From left: Robert De Feo, 1999 Recipient of Firefighter of the Year Award, with Roger G. Gillis, 2000 Recipient of Firefighter of the Year Award.



From left: Apparatus Operator Santiago, FS 90, 30 years; Engineer Quintana, FS 19, 18 years; and Kathleen White, Inspector II, Engineering Unit, 25 years



Staff from the Fire Chief's Office.



Staff from the Fire Chief's Office.



Captain Finn receives a very impressive plaque.



Councilman Tom LaBonge and Capt. Jim Finn join in.



Firefighter of the Year Past Recipients in attendance were (in order of the year in which they were awarded): 1970 Bill Goss, 1977 Don Beaver, 1981 Rudy Concha, 1982 William Dahlquist, 1983 Sam Ortega, 1984 Lyle Hall, 1989 Barney Nipp, 1990 Scotty Lenz, 1991 William Finn, 1992 Dennis Willahan, 1993 Terry Tuzzolino, 1994 Ralph Rodriguez, 1996 John Squire, 1997 John White, 1999 Robert J. De Feo, 2000 Roger G. Gillis, 2001 Patrick M. Shanley, 2003 Jesus S. Pasos

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