

KEVIN STERENCHUK



"He has given his best. For our brother, the last alarm. He has gone home."

- Fire Chief Steve Havlik

"Family was always the most important aspect of Dad's life. We are so proud of you, Dad, and love you much."

- Children of Kevin Sterenchuk

"Kevin's death has challenged each and every one us. How does a loving God take someone who has been so generous from us at such a young age? The safety, the concern, the welfare of others. Now, why wouldn't God want someone like that in heaven? It's not a perfect answer, but it is food for thought."

- Bishop William Franklin

On Monday, March 27, 2000, Cedar Rapids Fire Department Administrative District Chief Kevin F. Sterenchuk died of a heart attack while in his office at Central Fire Station. The fire department mourned the loss of a fellow firefighter by honoring Sterenchuk at a memorial service at All Saints Catholic Church on Thursday, March 30th. Over 1,000 family members and friends attended services that included the fire department's Honor Guard. Engine 8, with its rotating beacons draped in black, carried Sterenchuk's coffin from Cedar Memorial Cemetery to the church in a processional that included a contingent of fire, police, and emergency vehicles.

Flags at all nine Cedar Rapids fire stations were flown at half-mast for several days to honor Chief Sterenchuk. Firefighters throughout the country also honored a "fallen brother" by flying flags at half-mast at the National Fallen Firefighters' Memorial (located at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland), at the Iowa Firefighters Memorial in Coralville, and at several surrounding Iowa fire departments.

Sterenchuk joined the fire department as a firefighter on August 3, 1974. During his nearly 27-year career at the Cedar Rapids Fire Department, Sterenchuk was instrumental in creating the technical rescue team and training personnel to the emergency medical technician-defibrillation

level. Sterenchuk's first promotion was to the lieutenant rank on February 4, 1984. He was subsequently promoted to Captain on November 28, 1986. Sterenchuk then became an Administrative District Chief on October 18, 1997, where he oversaw the department's river and ice rescue team, hazardous materials team, and the carbon monoxide emergencies program. He also served as the departmental liaison to the Linn County Firefighters Association, the Linn County and State Emergency Management agencies, and the local Emergency Planning Commission.

Sterenchuk also served as a paramedic at Area Ambulance Service in Cedar Rapids. He was a member of All Saints Catholic Church and was the assistant girls' basketball coach at Xavier High School.

Sterenchuk is survived by his wife, Patricia, and their five children, Amy, Ann, Patrick, Matthew, and Daniel. Our deepest sympathies, and also our highest gratitude, are extended to the Sterenchuk family.

Eulogy delivered by Fire Chief Steve Havlik at the Sterenchuk Memorial Service:

Good Morning.

My name is Steve Havlik, Chief of the Fire Department. The Cedar Rapids Fire Department would like to welcome everyone here today and thank you for coming to honor one of our brothers, Kevin Sterenchuk. Kevin joined the Cedar Rapids Fire Department on August 3rd, 1974. Despite the efforts of his fellow firefighters, ambulance personnel, doctors and nurses, he died of a sudden illness on March 27th, 2000.

I would like to take a moment today to talk about Kevin and his career on the Fire Department. Kevin began his tour of duty as a rookie Firefighter at Central Fire Station on August 3rd, 1974. As a rookie, each Firefighter is given a performance evaluation by their officer. By sharing the following evaluations, it was evident that even early in Kevin's career, he was destined to succeed.

"Kevin's attitude and willingness to perform makes him a definite asset to our crew and the Department. He is an excellent Fireman and a potential officer."

- Lieutenant Dolan

"Kevin is enthusiastic, willing, and works to achieve his, and the Department's goals. Outstanding employee."

- District Chief Davidson

These same qualities would follow Kevin throughout his entire career on the Fire Department. Because of Kevin's dedication and attitude, he moved up the ranks quickly. He was promoted to Lieutenant on February 4th, 1984, and to Captain on November 28th, 1986. At the rank of Captain, Kevin was instrumental in helping our department become certified as EMT-D's. Kevin helped teach the initial classes to many of the on duty Firefighters. On October 12th, 1997, Kevin was promoted to Administrative District Chief.

Kevin was the program manager and was instrumental in the formation of the Special Operations and Hazardous Materials Teams. Despite some initial challenges, Kevin turned our rescue teams into one of the finest programs in the Midwest. His ability to overcome obstacles earned him the title of "Teflon Man" - nothing bothered Kevin. An obstacle to him was looked upon as a challenge.

Kevin was very involved with his career on the Fire Department, but always had time to share his talents with his family and other members of the community. He was so proud of his contributions to the Girls basketball program at Xavier High School, and so excited when they went to State this year. Kevin was involved in so many programs that it would be impossible for me to list them all, but he was always there when someone needed his help, always ready to contribute his time and energy.

His untimely death will leave a huge void in our department. I will remember Kevin not only as a tremendous employee, but also as a great friend. We will all miss Kevin and he will always be in our hearts and always be considered a member of our family