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## **IFD Chief Ernest Malone**

### **“Meet the new Chief”**

INDIANAPOLIS - It came as no surprise to many when Ernest Malone was announced today as the 42<sup>nd</sup> Chief of the Indianapolis Fire Department. His appointment, by Mayor Greg Ballard, to succeed current Chief Brian Sanford, was highly anticipated by those who know of his capabilities, work ethic and philosophies. In April, Brian Sanford announced he was stepping down as Chief of IFD to take on a larger role as the new Chief of Staff for Public Safety. Even after today's announcement, Sanford will continue as Chief during the 30 day transition period to get Chief Malone off to a solid head start. While Chief Malone has an impressive array of credentials and qualifications, that made him the right choice to be the next Chief of IFD, knowing where he came from and how he got there is equally as important.

Ernest V Malone 51, was born and raised in Indianapolis. A true product of his hometown, Ernest was told he could accomplish anything he wanted... and he believed it. During his childhood, Ernest lived in two homes within the IFD service district. The first was at 3116 Ruckle St and the second at 5408 E 40<sup>th</sup> St. He fondly remembers both and says that he often drives by just to reflect and remember where he came from. He attended IPS schools 42 & 53 and says his favorite 7<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher, Mrs. Gray, told him to “Study hard and pay attention. Reach for stars and you can do anything you want.” Malone would tell you that those words resonated with him and helped encourage his love for continued education to this day. A triple threat athlete at Arlington High School, Ernest played football (Running Back – Linebacker), Basketball (Guard) and Baseball (Infield). His favorite subjects? Math, Business and US History. He graduated in 1981.

Chief Malone's accomplishments also include a Master's Degree in Management from Indiana Wesleyan, an Associate Degree in Fire Science from Ivy Tech, Executive Fire Officer certification from the National Fire Academy and is the 1<sup>st</sup> Indianapolis Firefighter ever to receive the designation of Chief Fire Officer from the Center for Public Safety Excellence

When you talk to “Ernie” about his family, it is clear that he has his priorities straight. Meeting his wife of 12 years Tammy, through mutual friends, was clearly a blessing for him. Ernie has two grown sons from an earlier marriage, Kirk age 26 and Karl age 23. Tammy, a manager with the US Postal Service has one son, George Thomas age 31. The family lives on the Northwest side of Indianapolis in Pike Township and attends Eastern Star Baptist Church.

Ernest is the middle child of 5 siblings, each with an obvious devotion to service in their careers. Eric, the oldest, spent 26 years in the Army before becoming a Pastor. Dana was a Special Needs teacher with Warren Township before her retirement. Monica, has been a driver for UPS for 29 years and Erroll Christopher “Chris” is a ten year, veteran Detective with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. That show of commitment to service occupations comes from the strong work ethic bestowed by Ernest’s mom and dad, both now deceased. His father Ernest, hearing that work was plentiful in Indianapolis, moved here in the early 1940’s from Gallatin, Tennessee. Not interested in the Tennessee family farming business, he sought work at 3 different Indianapolis corporate giants...Eli Lilly, Stokely-Van Camp and Allison’s. As Ernie tells it, his father settled on Lilly’s because he says “the people there were the nicest. “ Ernest Malone worked 43 years at Lilly’s as a plant supervisor and passed in 2008. His mom Mary was a Dental Assistant for 16 years before opening an in-home licensed day care. She passed in 1996. No doubt that they would be extremely proud of their son’s success.

Ernest took his first job in 1976, at age 14, working at “Meadows Bowl” as a porter. When it closed, he began working at Miracle Lanes Bowl. Fast forward to 1985. Ernie will tell you that he did not know anyone on or anything about the IFD nor did he have any prior aspirations to be a firefighter. But as fate would have it, a walk through the Indiana Black Expo would change his life forever. It was there he met and was recruited by Lt. Eddie Rogers (IFD Ladder 19B). Ernest was taken by Eddie’s excitement about the job of being a firefighter and his obvious love for firefighting. Later that week he had a follow up conversation with Eddie who convinced him to apply for the IFD. Because both departments were actively hiring at the time, Ernest ended up applying to both IFD and IPD and was still in IPD’s process when the IFD hired him. As any firefighter would jokingly tell you...”he definitely got in the right line.”

Malone was working as a Loss Prevention manager at Target, making \$23,500, when he was hired by IFD on February 25, 1986 at a starting salary of \$13,500. He was 23 years old. During his career Ernest remembers Eddie saying “I don’t take credit for a lot but I am taking credit for you.” Lt. Eddie Rogers retired from the IFD in 2006. He died only months later of pancreatic cancer. He was one of the greats.

Ernie knows firsthand that legacy and connections to the fire service are important but he emphasizes that opportunities exist for those who don’t have them. He believes that recruiting is important.

IFD Recruit Class 58 was comprised of 32 members. 18 white males, 10 black males and 4 women who quickly formed an unbreakable bond and the motto “No recruit left behind – everybody graduates.” 22 members of class 58 remain on the job and will celebrate the completion of 29 years of service in February 2015. The other 10 members either resigned, retired or passed away. Within that class Ernest Malone holds several distinctions. He was the 1<sup>st</sup> member of class 58 to be promoted to Lieutenant, one of 4 members of class 58 to

be promoted to Captain and was the 1<sup>st</sup> member of class 58 to be promoted to Battalion Chief. Malone states that on the job mentoring, early in his career, was important to his overall path and success. Two of those mentors were Chief Harry Tibbett's (Ret.) - Training Academy and then Captain Joe Olofson (Ret.- Battalion Chief) – Engine 14 C. His most influential current mentor? Without a doubt....Chief Brian Sanford.

Certifications include – Firefighter 1 & 2, Fire Officer IV, EMT, Haz Mat Technician, BERT/CRT Certified, High and Low Angle Rope Rescue, Top Water Rescue and Master Diver Certification. Chief Malone would tell you that the Dive Training program was the toughest training he has participated in during his career. In 28 years Chief Malone has not had a single sick day off work other than to recover from a line of duty injury.

Career Assignments include:

6-1-86 Probationary FF  
12-20-88 Assigned to Engine 14 C  
3-3-91 Promoted to Merit Rank of Lieutenant  
5-29-91 Assigned to Engine 2 B  
1-10-98 Assigned to Medic Squad 14 B  
3-17-02 Promoted to Merit Rank of Captain  
8-31-02 Appointed Rank to Assistant Chief of Training Division  
2-22-03 Appointed Rank to IFD Fire Marshal/Division Chief of Fire Prevention  
1-7-06 Promoted to Merit Rank of Battalion Chief  
9-7-08 Appointed to Division Chief of Personnel/Finance  
11-29-10 Appointed to Assistant Chief of IFD  
7-7-14 Appointed as Chief of IFD

Ernest is described by fellow firefighters as an aggressive firefighter, tactically knowledgeable and tenacious about getting the job done right...but safely. He is a good listener who as an officer shows equal amounts of concern and compassion but has little regard for misbehavior. He is squared away and elicits that type of positive role modeling to those around him. Having spent the last 12 years in an administrative function, Ernest states that he often misses the high energy that surrounds station life and all that it entails...especially meal time. His favorite firehouse lunch meal – Salad with Chicken. His Favorite Firehouse dinner meal – Lasagna and when it was his turn to cook his go to meal was Spicy Pepper Baked Chicken, Broccoli/Cauliflower mix with Cheese, rolls and his mom's Peach Cobbler Recipe. Now he's lucky if he can find time to eat lunch or dinner ever.

Chief Malone's 28 years on the IFD has not gone unnoticed. Highly decorated during his years of service his commendations include: American Red Cross Heroes Hall of Fame (2001) FPDS Administrative Officer of the Year (2012), FPDS Service Firefighter of the year (2004), IFD Professional Excellence Award (2002), IFD Medal of Bravery (2001), IFD Unit Commendation (2001), FPDS Firefighter of the Year (2000), FPDS Community Service Officer of the Year (1997), IFD Medal of Merit (1989) and FPDS Rookie of the Year (1986).

On his off days from the firehouse, Ernest was a Reserve Deputy with the Marion County Sheriff's Department from 1995-1999. During that time he was promoted to Corporal, Trained as an FTO and rode with the motorcycle unit. In 1997 he was awarded the FPDS Reserve Officer of the Year. His Hobbies include: Fishing – Bass, Crappie and Walleye, Reading -Self Development and Servant Leadership books and Corvettes – He and Tammy own a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Corvette that they show nationally. He works out daily preferring to bike and lift weights.

Firefighters on the IFD appreciate the work that Ernest Malone has devoted to becoming the selection for the next Chief of IFD. They are confident that the mentorship he received from Chief Brian Sanford will continue during his tenure and keep IFD at the national forefront as leaders in health, safety and training. His favorite part about coming to work every day? “Looking forward to the unexpected” His favorite part about staying at work? “The people” What would he tell a new firefighter? “Care about each other. Take care of each other. Appreciate the highs and lows and the extended family you have in the fire service. No one understands what we do better than the family you live with every 3<sup>rd</sup> day.”

His vision going forward is simple: “Serve our Customers, Run the Business, Manage Resources and Develop Employees.”

The over 1200 men and women of the Indianapolis Fire Department, sworn and civilian, would like to congratulate Chief Ernest Malone on his appointment as the 42<sup>nd</sup> Chief of the IFD.

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