



Teresa Singleton
President

PHOENIX OF THE DETROIT FIRE DEPARTMENT

IN SERVICE TO THE CITY OF DETROIT

HISTORIC ENGINE 11 FIREHOUSE, 2733 GRATIOT, DETROIT, MI 48207, 313-888-9946
EMAIL: wethedfdphoenix@gmail.com INSTAGRAM: thephoenixdetroit
FACEBOOK: Phoenix of The Detroit Fire Department

2020-2021 REFLECTIONS

As we approach the end of another year, there is simply no way that I can express my gratitude for each and every one of you, and the partnerships we have had during this extraordinarily challenging time. Since the pandemic, there have been plenty of reasons to feel despair. We have experienced so many lives taken by this deadly virus, a toll that continues to grow with each passing day. And just when it felt like dark times could not get any

darker, we were besieged by the killing of innocent Black men and women at the hands of some of those meant to protect us and an unsettling increase of horrific crimes in our communities. These painful moments were not made any easier by the divisions that only seem to deepen our low morale with each department, local, state and federal election cycle. However, throughout all of this, an unshakable beacon of hope has been the commitment our membership has shown to the community we serve and each other.

For me, the holiday season is a time to pause and reflect, something there has been precious little time for since the start of the pandemic along with all the grueling hours most of you are working with respect to the manpower shortage and transition to the new schedule. I am especially mindful that whatever hardships, successes, or opportunities that lie ahead for us, the years 2020 and 2021 will continue to be remembered for years to come. Amidst all the moral reckoning we have faced in our personal lives,

(Continued on page 2)



Phoenix President Teresa Singleton poses with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer (D) at Detroit's Engine 40.

100 Strong Retiree Get-Together Includes Commissioners, Twin Chiefs, & 'Ol School

Over one hundred retired DFD members recently attended the Phoenix-sponsored 'family reunion.' The event was held at the historic Engine 11 firehouse.

Among those in attendance included former executive fire commissioners Harold Watkins and James Mack.

Several 'ol' school' guys were in attendance. The first of those was former chief of training Paul Garrison.

Paul Garrison was one of the founding members of the Phoenix. He was one of six people who met at Donald Robinson's home in the mid-sixties to found the Phoenix. That would be some 55 years or so of support to the Phoenix.

Dwight Anderson, Clifford Ford, and Steven Carter were also part of the 'ol' school' contingent of retirees. This group were officers of the organization in the 1980s. That would be some 36 years or so of support to the Phoenix.

Lastly, the 'twins' were in attendance also. Former chiefs Derrick and Dennis Holmes were in attendance. These two were very well-known on the DFD.

The planned four-hour event started at 1:00 pm and was scheduled to conclude at 4:00 pm. It actually ended about 8:30 pm...some 7 1/2 hours after it started. The event was catered. Out-of-town retirees were able to participate by Zoom. Retired Chief of Community Relations Samuel Dixon of Florida was one of the most senior Zoom participants. Former Phoenix presidents, Marvin Beatty, James Gilmore, and Fred Wheeler, also participated by Zoom.



Photos show former DFD commissioners Harold Watkins and James Mack.



Photos show Dwight Anderson and Clifford Ford and Steven Carter.



Paul Garrison Photo shows twins Derrick Holmes and Dennis Holmes.

A great time was had by all.



Photo shows former 2nd Deputy Commissioner Orlando Gregory talking to former Captain John Miller.

Spry 94-Year-Old Chief Sam Dixon Remembers 1st Ten



Samuel Dixon

In a recent telephone conversation with former chief of Community Relations, Samuel Dixon relayed he is able to recall the first ten blacks who were hired by the DFD.

According to Dixon, in the order of their hiring, they were Marcena Taylor, Marvin White, Joseph Burrell, Charles Steele, Samuel Dixon, Robert McClary, Donald Robinson, Walter Pettus, Carrol Scales, and Kenneth Wellman (see photos at right).

Born in Shreveport, LA, Dixon was part of the great migration in 1942. His family lived in the Fischer/Mack Ave area of Detroit. His father worked for US Rubber. Dixon would eventually work for Detroit Street & Railways gassing buses. He also drove street cars for the city. Dixon recalls there being a 'colored' YMCA at St. Antoine and Adams St.

Chief Dixon's sharp memory mirrors his career and contributions to the DFD. At the age of 24, he was appointed to the DFD. It was November 11, 1951. His first assignment was at Ladder 10/Engine 18.

As he rose through the ranks, Chief Dixon was pivotal in having the City of Detroit hire more minorities and females. While attending a badge ceremony in 1970, he overheard then-Mayor Roman Gribbs remark 'where the black guys?' He was at a ceremony for some 36 new firefighters. There were no minorities nor females in the group.

To address the mayor's concerns, Chief Dixon was directed to create a plan to address this condition. Chief Dixon replied with "...I have already written a plan."

One element of his plan dealt with the oral exam new recruits were subjected to.

When asked whether they had traffic tickets, more minority recruits answered affirmatively. This was a result of the bias they were subjected to by police officers. Although white recruits engaged in minor traffic violations, such as spinning their car's tires, they were not ticketed. This enabled them to make it past the oral examination portion of their testing. (Dixon

(Continued on page 2)

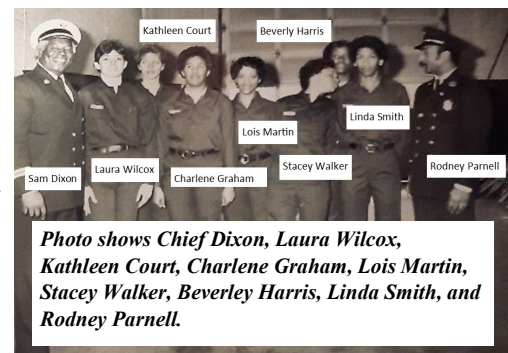


Photo shows Chief Dixon, Laura Wilcox, Kathleen Court, Charlene Graham, Lois Martin, Stacey Walker, Beverly Harris, Linda Smith, and Rodney Parnell.



Top right photo shows Chief Dixon posing with several of the first females on the DFD. These new recruits benefited from a plan he created. The photo above shows many of the early founders of the Phoenix. Chief Samuel Dixon is shown as number 9.

(Continued from page 1)

department, and communities, I continue to draw inspiration from how we all have adapted to our new realities and how we have continued to support the community's health and well-being and each other.

Since July 2020, when I took seat as President of the Phoenix along with the rest of the Executive Board and Board of Trustees, we have made tremendous leaps and bounds to carry out the mission of the Phoenix. Despite the ongoing global pandemic, unimaginable human loss of those we love and catastrophic changes in the way we do business, we have continued pivoting along with providing services, programs, and essential benefits to the community under lockdown or restrictions. We have all done it, continuing to work the frontlines, taking care of family the community and more.



Photos show Phoenix President Teresa Singleton posing in selfie with Donnie Warmack & Melissa Redman of Malcolm X Academy. Top photo also shows FEO Lamont Tate. Two lower photos show Phoenix members Lt. Dale Fahoome, FF Desmond Orr, and TFF Ronnell Best.

As I look back on this past year, I am so proud that we:

- Gave the gift of warmth by hosting coat drives. We provided coats to over five thousand youth in various communities in the City of Detroit.
- We partnered with other non-profits for the ultimate Easter Egg Hunt/Easter Basket Giveaway.
- We were a co-sponsor of the 2021 Prayer Walk against Domestic Violence.
- We co-sponsored Car Seat safety sessions to new and expecting mothers.
- In August, we launched "Project 100" in an effort to recruit at least 100 Detroiters as candidates for hire for a career as a

Detroit Fire Fighter. I am proud to say over these last four months we have coached, mentored, and trained 88 candidates of which most have gone on to pass both written and CPAT and currently awaiting oral interviews.

- Most notably we hosted the 1st Annual Retirees Luncheon engaging well over one hundred "PHOENIX" retired Detroit Fire Fighters. For their convenience, we made a request to the Retirement System of the City of Detroit to make available to Phoenix fire retirees a deduction from their pension for dues to the Phoenix and was approved unanimously.
- In November we challenged the Detroit Police mainly from the 10th precinct, in a Basketball Charity Fundraiser where all proceeds benefited families and children in the Durfee and Central High School community for the holidays.
- We will finished the year with a kick-off to World Kindness Day by donating cases of blankets to local homeless shelters in a Blanket Drive hosted by Paul Roberson Malcom X Academy (see photos at left).

The current Phoenix Executive Board has made it our purpose to grow with intention as a team and continue the mission of the organization. Know that our team of like-minded and determined professionals will continue to enable the organization's success because we believe in collaboration. We rely on your comradery and participation as we are all better, smarter, and grittier together.

So, I thank you. Thanks to a formidable executive board, awesome membership, committed lay leaders, and our community for looking past the challenges and seeing the opportunity this past year has presented. I look forward to becoming STRONGER THAN EVER. None of this would be possible without tremendous partnerships. I am so grateful for them all. I look forward to better days ahead with you all as we continue this journey together.

Stay safe and well as we continue to RISE as a positive force and remember, **ALL THAT WE ARE, WE OWE!**

Teresa

(Continued from page 1)

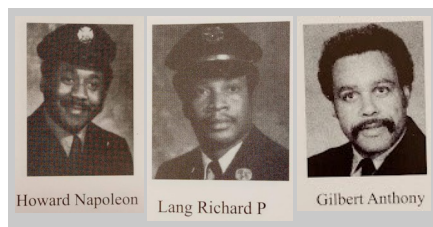
was the first minority to sit on the oral interview board.)



Paul Garrison

attendance at the Phoenix formation meeting. His photo here is from a gathering on October 27, 2021 at Phoenix offices at Engine 11.)

Chief Dixon also recalls the first Phoenix meeting. It was in the mid-sixties in the basement of Donald Robinson's house. Joining him at the meeting were Donald Robinson, Robert Butler, Napoleon Howard, Richard Lang, Anthony Gilbert, and Paul Garrison. (Paul Garrison is shown at left in attendance some 55 years after his



After serving as a firefighter, firefighter driver, a lieutenant in Fire Prevention, a captain in Community Relations, and as the chief of Community Relations, he retired after some 34 years of service to the citizens of Detroit.

After leaving the DFD, Chief Dixon was hired as the chief of the Flint, Michigan Fire Department.

Chief Dixon currently resides in sunny Florida.

FIRE & RESCUE

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

COBRA Training

(Anniston, Alabama, <https://cdp.dhs.gov/find-training/course/PER-262>) The HOT course provides responders with the unique opportunity to practice their knowledge and skills in a practical exercise in the Nation's only toxic chemical-agent training facility, the Chemical, Ordnance, Biological and Radiological (COBRA) Training Facility.

BOMB TRAINING

(NEVADA, http://www.ctosnnsa.org/pages/courses/courses_resident.htm) Resident training courses are conducted on-site at the Nevada National Nuclear Site (NNSS) by Counter Terrorism Operations Support (CTOS). The NNSS is a massive outdoor laboratory, national experimental center, and training facility located 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. Originally established for testing nuclear weapons, from 1951 to 1992, 1,021 nuclear detonations and numerous radiological dispersal tests have been executed at the NNSS. This rich nuclear testing history of the NNSS offers dynamic training opportunities today. The 1,375 square miles of secluded and secure land at the NNSS provide a safe environment for training in realistic WMD scenarios.

DETROIT FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING ACADEMY

The many training sessions of the DFD training academy are conducted by well-seasoned DFD personnel. They are trained in both the technical, operational, and administrative aspects of the fire service.

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

(Dillard Univ, New Orleans, LA, <https://edionline.net>) The Carl Holmes Executive Development Institute was born out of the effort to address the problem of African Americans in the fire service being denied the opportunity to receive cutting edge management training. The concept proposed by Carl Holmes, then Assistant Chief of the Oklahoma City Fire Department, was to have African American instructors deliver course material in the area of their expertise or current area of management within the fire service.

FIRE STAFF & COMMAND

(Eastern Michigan Univ, Ypsilanti, MI, <https://www.emich.edu/cet/cerns/fire-staff-command/index.php>)

This is an intensive program consisting of 350 hours of classroom instruction that will require out of class study, preparation of papers, projects, and examinations. The

experience will take the officer beyond traditional operational methods and strategic thinking and creative and innovative problem solving skills for current and future law enforcement executives paving the way for further advancement to senior leadership positions within their department.

HENRY FORD COLLEGE

(<https://catalog.hfcc.edu/programs/firefighterparamedic-aas>) Offers a career pathway for individuals seeking an entry-level position with a full-time municipal fire service. Course work provides a combination of academic education with necessary hands-on skills. Degree recipients earn an Associate in Applied Science, an EMT-Basic license, paramedic certification, Firefighter I & II



certification, and valuable field/clinical experience.

NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

(Emmitsburg, MD, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/>) The National Fire Academy (NFA) works to enhance the ability of fire and emergency services and allied professionals to deal more effectively with fire and related emergencies. Free training courses and programs are delivered at our campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, online and throughout the nation.

SCHOOLCRAFT COMMUNITY COLLEGE FIRE TRAINING

(<https://www.schoolcraft.edu/in-service/fire-training>) Schoolcraft College strives to offer the most current and effective up-to-date training available, yet keeping your budget constraints in mind. In addition to mandated training, we continue to seek new courses in response to today's multi-faceted demands. In doing so, we try to stay consistent with the ever changing trends in the fire community and the training needed to keep fire fighters current.

NEW BRANDING FOR PHOENIX

We're thrilled to unveil our refreshed brand identity. The updates show the evolution of our organization since its founding in 1967. While this is a significant change, our core beliefs haven't changed. We assure you, the new brand is a positive transformation and will not affect the service and commitment the organization has demonstrated thus far. We have analyzed our values as an organization and are creating a brand identity that reflects those values.

Over the last few months, we have poured our hearts and souls into creating a new image that would accurately depict who we are, at our core as an organization. After careful consideration, we chose a new logo that reflects a modern, cleaner look and captures our mission to RISE strong in

service. The new logo evokes strong feelings of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm.

If you didn't know, the Phoenix is an immortal bird that cyclically regenerates or is otherwise born again. Associated with the sun, a phoenix obtains new life by arising from the ashes of its predecessor.

The phoenix is symbolic of rebirth, hope, renewal, progress, end of oppression, strength, and eternity. It is no wonder that the beautiful bird has inspired many tales and even legends. Through these legends and representations, the birds' wings are significant to its enormous strength, the fire represents life in flames of change, the maltese is symbolic of the sun, and for us, "67" is reflective of our founding and era of transformation from racial injustice. In its

totality, the new logo truly represents a strong continuation of life in flames of change with the ability to lift us from the ashes of destruction into heights of unbelievable optimism and renewal. Going forward, you will notice the changes of our rebranding with signage, social media, website, apparel, and promotions.

Collectively, we have an extraordinary lineage in the fire service, but we're not here to coast along. This is about making our own way.

Enjoy the changes as we aspire to the greatest heights of accomplishment for ourselves and the community we serve!

All that we are, we owe
Phoenix of the Detroit Fire Department
Executive Board & Board of Trustees

