

# Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association

## CERTIFICATE OF INDUCTION

This certifies that

**Chief Barron Kennedy, III**

has been inducted into the

## Tennessee Fire Service Hall of Fame

A legacy recognition program to honor individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, exceptional dedicated service, and lasting contributions to the formation and continued success of the Tennessee Fire Service.

This honor is bestowed by the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association to acknowledge a career that exemplifies professionalism, integrity, and commitment to the fire service mission.

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Chief Brian Biggs, President  
Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association

Date: May 7<sup>th</sup> 2026





***Mission of this program:*** The mission of our Hall of Fame is defined as "A legacy recognition program to honor individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and/or have provided exceptional service and contributions to the formation and continued success of the Tennessee Fire Service."

## **The Legacy of Fire Chief Barron Kennedy, III**

Born in 1948 in South Carolina, Chief Barron Kennedy's lifelong passion for the fire service began early. Inspired by one of his Boy Scout leaders, a member of the Greenville South Carolina Fire Department, Barron developed an admiration for those who dedicate their lives to protecting others. That spark would grow into a remarkable career spanning five decades of service, leadership, and education in the Tennessee fire service.

After graduating from Furman University, Barron first worked in the environmental field before joining the Lancaster Fire Department in South Carolina in 1975. Those early years—riding tailboards, sleeping in the bunkroom, and answering calls in the middle of the night—shaped his understanding of dedication and teamwork. They also came with risks, and Barron later became a 20-year cancer survivor, a testament to his resilience and faith.

In 1977, Barron moved to Tennessee and joined the Rural/Metro Fire Department of Knox County, working his way up to Station Captain. After marrying his wife, Jody, in 1978, the couple relocated to her hometown of Tazewell, where Barron joined the Tazewell/New Tazewell Fire Department. His love for training and professional development led him to attend the Tennessee State Fire School, where legendary instructors such as George Hunt, Charlie Lewis, Owen Collins, and Lewis Baker left a lasting impression.

In 1987, Barron became Chief of the Tazewell/New Tazewell Fire Department, a role he would hold for over three decades. That same year, he was invited to serve as an instructor for the State Fire School, marking the beginning of more than 28 years of teaching across Tennessee. When the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy opened, Barron became a Regional Coordinator and Instructor II, developing and updating key curriculum including Instructor I, II, and III courses. Thousands of Tennessee firefighters benefited from his mentorship, and many who went on to become chiefs still recall, "Chief, I was in your class—and I'm where I am today because of you."

A dedicated leader, Barron joined the Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) in 1979, serving in nearly every capacity over the years—including President (2004–2005) and Secretary (2000–

2025) before being named Secretary Emeritus for Life. Under his leadership, the association grew in membership, professionalism, and influence—helping to define qualifications for fire departments, firefighters, and chief officers statewide. His advocacy also contributed to the recognition of occupational cancer coverage for first responders.

In addition to his volunteer fire service, Barron worked for 15 years as a Claiborne County schoolteacher, became one of the first Claiborne County 911 dispatchers, and served for many years as a certified Building and Fire Inspector for several small towns. He remains active in public service as a Planning Commission Planner and as a Board Member for the Great Smoky Mountain Council of Scouting America. A longtime Presbyterian, he became a Methodist and now serves as Chairman of the Administrative Council at New Tazewell Methodist Church.

Barron’s educational background includes:

- B.S. in Biology – Furman University
- M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction – University of Tennessee
- A.S. in Fire Science – Chattanooga State Community College

His professional affiliations reflect his deep commitment to fire service advancement:

- Life Member, International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- Tennessee Director (10+ years), National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)
- Member, International Association of Fire Fighters, Tennessee Firemen’s Association, Tennessee Fire Inspectors Association, National Fire Protection Association, and Tennessee Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators

Barron retired from active duty after 33 years with the Tazewell/New Tazewell Fire Department but continues to mentor and advocate for firefighters across Tennessee. He and his wife Jody, married for over 47 years, have shared this journey every step of the way. Their children, Barron IV and Sarah, both served with the Tazewell/New Tazewell Fire Department and trained at both the old State Fire School and the new Academy—continuing the Kennedy family’s legacy of service.

Barron Kennedy’s impact on Tennessee’s fire service is immeasurable. Through his teaching, leadership, and unwavering dedication, he has shaped generations of firefighters, instilled pride in professionalism, and advanced the health and safety of those who serve.

“The greatest reward in my career has been watching those I’ve trained become leaders themselves. If I’ve helped even one firefighter be safer, smarter, or more confident in their calling—then it’s all been worth it. The fire service isn’t just a job—it’s a lifelong brotherhood built on sacrifice, trust, and a commitment to something greater than oneself “

— Barron Kennedy, III

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**Congratulations on your induction into this prestigious legacy program.** This honor reflects a lifetime of dedication, leadership, and service to others, and it recognizes a legacy that will endure well beyond today.

As FDNY Chief Edward F. Croker so powerfully stated, “I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a fireman.” Your career embodies that calling, and your example will continue to inspire generations within the fire service.