

Syracuse Fire Chief Michael Downes Will be Honored at Scholarship Fund Benefit

Syracuse Fire Chief Michael Downes will be the honored guest at the Firemen's Scholarship Fund Dinner on October 22, sponsored by the Loyal Order of the Moose, Syracuse Lodge.

Chief Downes has had a long and distinguished career in the fire service. He has been Chief of the Syracuse Fire Department for the past seven months. Before being appointed Chief, Downes served as Deputy Chief, District Chief and Captain. He has been with the Syracuse Fire Department for 38 years.

Chief Downes has taught and trained just about every member of the Syracuse Fire Department. He served as the Chief Officer at the Department's Training Tower.

Chief Downes is also the recipient of the Hendricks Medal, the highest award issued by the City of Syracuse for valor. He earned this honor while a member of the Rescue Company. On Sunday, February 25, 1962, Chief Downes responded with Rescue Company 1 to an alarm at 516 East Willow Street. The blaze had gained headway throughout the rambling, three-story apartment building and extremely heavy smoke had filled the entire structure.

After assisting in the rescue of an elderly couple via a ladder placed to their second-floor apartment window, Downes fought his way through flames and toxic smoke to the third floor where he heard Leo Dimoff calling weakly for help. In spite of the fact that his vision was obscured by the dense smoke, Downes found his way to the elderly man and carried him back through the burning apartment to safety. His prompt and



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heroic action, said his superiors at the time certainly saved Mr. Dimoff from fatal injury.

The dinner will begin at 6 p.m. at the Syracuse Lodge, 1121 Milton Avenue in Syracuse. Music dancing will follow at 8 p.m. Tickets for the event are available at the Syracuse Fire Department's station

houses and at the Credit Union. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Firemen's Scholarship Fund.

Chief Downes is married to Joan (Morgan) Downes and they are the parents of nine children, Kathleen, Michael, Jr., John, Timothy, Thomas, Mary, Margaret, Patricia and Daniel.