



December 3rd Scholarship

Greater Worcester Community Foundation

After a deadly fire in Worcester on December 3rd, 1999, several local foundations endowed this scholarship to honor the six men who perished in the fire – Paul A. Brotherton, Timothy P. Jackson, Jeremiah M. Lucey, James F. Lyons III, Joseph T. McGuirk, and Thomas E. Spencer – and all members of the city’s fire and police departments. The scholarship is awarded to the children of Worcester firefighters and police officers.

Built in 1906, and vacant since 1989, the Worcester Cold Storage and Warehouse Co. building was six stories high and took up an entire block on Franklin Street, near Union Station. It caught fire on December 3rd when two trespassers accidentally tipped over a candle. They left the building and the fire burned unchecked until passersby saw smoke. At 6:15 p.m., the first alarm rang in the Grove and Central Street stations and trucks rushed to the fire. With a labyrinth of small rooms on every floor, and no windows above the ground level, the building was a dangerous environment for the 40 firefighters who went inside to fight the blaze. Conditions deteriorated quickly, and the inferno became deadly for six of those men. They left behind six widows and 17 children.

An estimated 30,000 firefighters, from around the country and as far away Australia and Ireland, attended the Memorial Service on December 9th. It was held in the Worcester Centrum and attended by President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and Massachusetts Senators Edward Kennedy and John Kerry. Individual funerals were held throughout the following week.

“We are never going to forget,” said District Chief Michael McNamee in a Telegram & Gazette article printed a year after the tragedy. “There is a tremendous amount of support from the firefighters for [the victims’] families, and that is never going to end.” This scholarship pays tribute to all past and present Worcester firefighters and police officers, with gratitude for their service.

For more information, please contact:
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