

## Section C

# Tribute to Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. & The Monohan's of St. Matthews, KY

## St. Matthews Fire Protection District

This is one of many sections that contain information, documents, letters, newspaper articles, pictures, etc. of the St. Matthews Fire Protection District. They have been collected and arranged in chronological order. These items were collected, organized and entered into a computerized database by Al Ring with the help of the St. Matthews Fire Department Alumni Association, Inc. The Association's members are Rick Albers, A. E. "Bill" Andriot, III, E. Gar Davis, Clarke Fenimore, Jack Monohan, Mike Noon, Russ Rakestraw and Al Ring.

The purpose of this "collection" was to create the background and research for the book *St. Matthews Firefighters, 84 Years of Firefighting in St. Matthews, Kentucky*, written by and published by Al Ring in 2004. The collection is continuing today, so if you should have old or new information on the St. Matthews Fire Department, please contact Al Ring.

All graphics have been improved to make the resolution as good as possible, but the reader should remember that many came from copies of old newspaper articles. This also applies to other items such as documents, letters, etc. Credit to the source of the documents, photos, etc. is provided whenever it was available. We realize that many items are not identified and regret that we weren't able to provide this information. As far as the newspaper articles that are not identified, 99% of them would have to be from one of three possible sources. *The Courier-Journal*, *The Louisville Times* or one of the *Voice* publications.

Please use this information as a reference tool only. If the reader uses any of the information for any purpose other than a reference tool, they must get permission from the source.

The Association would like to thank the St. Matthews Fire Protection District and various newspapers including *The Courier-Journal*, *The Louisville Times*, and *The Voice-Tribune*. Our appreciation is also extended to the various citizens and firefighters who contributed to the gathering of this information.



## **Tribute to Chief John M. Monohan, Jr and the Monohan's of St. Matthews**

### **Comments from Al Ring:**

John M. Monohan, Jr. was a unique man. His entire life was spent in the St. Matthews, Kentucky area and he truly loved the place and its people. This is not a story of a poor boy who grows up and makes good, it is a story of a St. Matthews boy with loving parents who saw something in the fire service that excited and motivated him. His brother joined the department first and John soon followed. John said in an interview once that he joined the department because "I guess I was just interested in the neighborhood and my neighbors. St. Matthews was a very friendly community then. You knew everybody. Now, you don't know anybody." STMFD Department records show that there had been many small fires on the family farm "Wildwood" off Browns lane and that may have also sparked his interest in the fire service.

John was a good, strong, tough leader who served as chief and president of the board. His honesty was known by all and though he wasn't a touchy feely man, he was sensitive and cared for his firefighters. Many a young firefighters will tell you of his guidance and advice in growing up.

The department was lucky to have him, and his strong leadership worked well for the time period that he was in charge. He accomplished so many things, too numerous to mention. For the most part the department stayed ahead of its area expansion, specialized in effective training and procured equipment that was second to none.

The story of John M. Monohan, Jr. cannot be told without reviewing the history of the St. Matthews Fire Department. For the period he served (1937 to 1982) John was a huge part of the total history. It is also interesting to note that John wasn't the only Monohan involved with the department. There were and are several other Monohan's who have or are serving the department. They include:

John McKiernan Monohan, captain of the Mechanics Company in the old Louisville Fire Department.  
Henry Apperious Monohan  
John M. "Jack" Monohan, III  
Douglas L. "Doug" Monohan  
William Kentnor "Kent" Monohan  
John Stuart Monohan  
Robert McKiernan Monohan (Robbie) served a while at Harrods Creek Fire Department  
Michael Monohan

### **Total of 9 Monohan's in the fire service.**

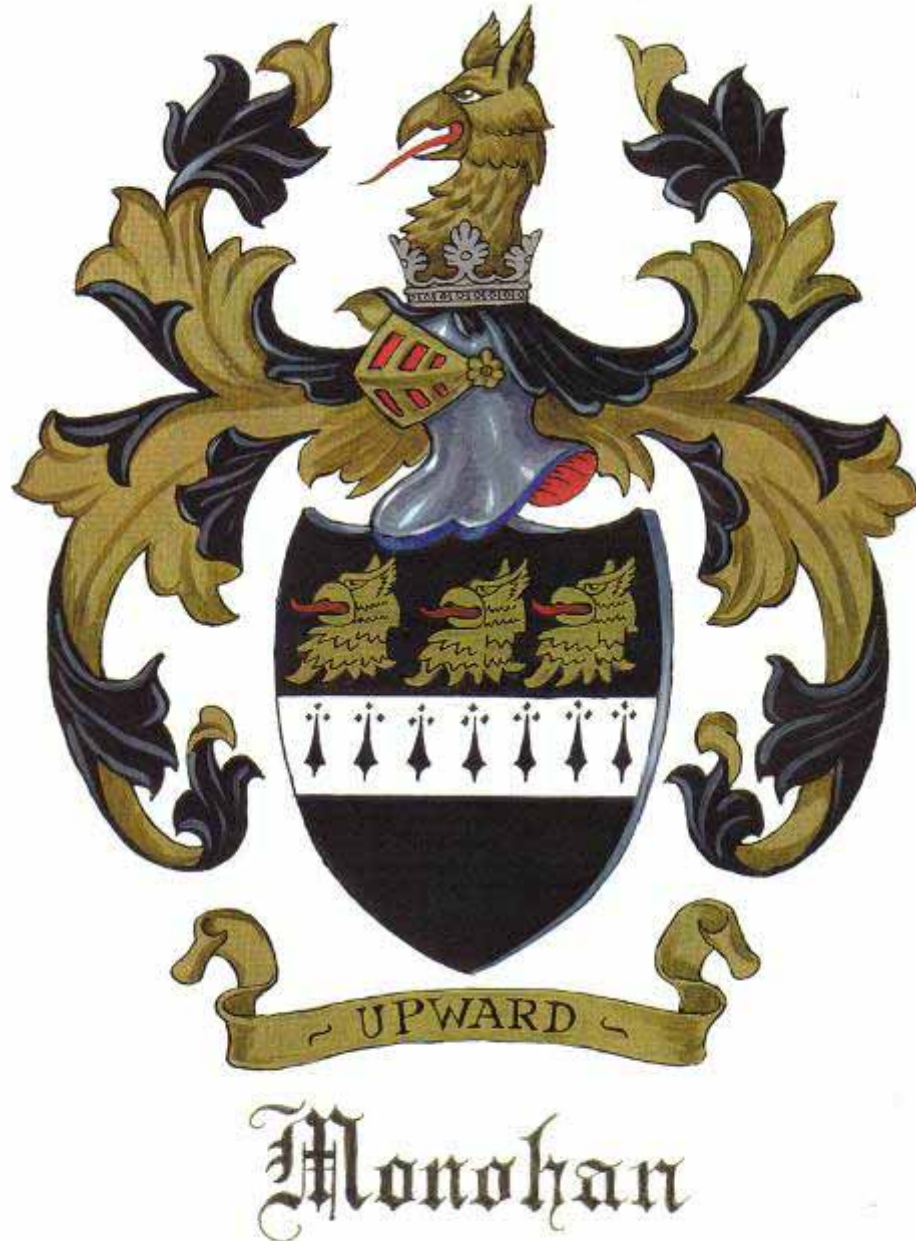
This collection of material is just a sampling of articles, information and pictures in numerical order so the reader may follow the lives of Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. and the St. Matthews Monohan's. A thanks to the St. Matthews Monohan's with special thanks to Dana Monohan for gathering additional information.

### **Chief John M. Monohan's Service.**

**40 Years as a member of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. (Joined in 1937)**  
**36 Years as Chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. (Became Chief September 1941)**  
**Retired from the Department as Chief. (July 1977)**  
**41 Years as member of the Board of Trustees of the Department.**

# Tribute to Chief John M. Monohan, Jr

## Family Crest



## Brief History of the St. Matthews Monohan Family

John McKiernan Monohan was born September 10, 1804 in Hagerstown, Maryland. He was the son of Timothy Monohan and Frances McKiernan, both natives of Ireland. As a young man he became an apprentice in the cabinet making business and in 1832 he decided to make Louisville his home. He owned and operated Monohan's Furniture for over 30 years. In addition to his furniture business he was a director of the Bank of Louisville, director and president of the Commercial Bank and member of the old volunteer fire department. Within the fire department he held the position of captain of the Mechanics Company.

In 1834 he married Lucy Fine of Louisville. Unfortunately he was widowed when his wife died during childbirth. He never remarried but in October of 1871 he adopted his great nephew Edward Sheehan and Edward's name was legally changed to Edward Sheehan Monohan (commonly referred to as E. S. Monohan).

John McKiernan Monohan



Edward Sheehan Monohan

Edward was born in Hagerstown, Maryland on August 11, 1855. He was the biological son of John Edward Sheehan and Francis McIlhenny. Francis' mother was Mary Monohan, the sister of John Monohan. The Sheehan family eventually moved from Maryland to St. Joseph, Missouri. Edward left Missouri in August of 1869 to live with his "Uncle Johnny" in Louisville. Two years later "Uncle Johnny" adopted Edward and legally changed his name. Edward attended the University of Notre Dame and graduated in June 1876. He moved back to Louisville and began working for the Bank of Kentucky, Louisville. In the fall of 1877 he settled in St. Matthews, Kentucky.

Edward was the president of the old Bardstown Turnpike Company for 10 years, president of the Gardeners and Farmers Market Company (known as the Haymarket), director of the First National Bank, Citizens National Bank, the Kentucky Title

and Savings Bank and the Fidelity Trust Company.

Edward Monohan married Alice O'Ferrall of Canton, Missouri on May 19, 1880.

This marriage produced two sons:

1. John McKiernan Monohan was born on July 9, 1881
2. Edward Sheehan Monohan, Jr. was born on June 22, 1883.

Both boys graduated from Georgetown University and became partners in their family farm business. John eventually left to pursue banking. He became president and director of First National Bank, The Kentucky Title and Trust and president of the Louisville Bankers' Association.

Alice O'Ferrall Monohan



## Brief History of the St. Matthews Monohan Family



John married the former Sara Michel Apperious (“Sadie”) of Montgomery, Alabama on November 20, 1907.

This marriage produced four children:

1. Mary Ellen Monohan born December 31, 1909
2. John McKiernan Monohan, Jr. born November 26, 1911
3. Alice O’Ferrall Monohan born November 26, 1912
4. Henry Apperious Monohan born August 27, 1914

Standing: Henry A. Monohan, Mary Ellen Monohan, John Monohan, Jr.

Sitting: Sadie Monohan, Alice Monohan, John Monohan, Sr.





## Brief History of the St. Matthews Monohan Family



Three Generations of the Monohan Family

John Monohan Jr. is far right with his brother Henry Monohan next to him

E. S. Monohan with his wife Alice O'Ferrall in the center

Edward S. Monohan, Jr. and family on left of picture

John M. Monohan, Sr. and family on right of picture

Standing—Thomas, Eleanor, Edward III, Charles, Mary Ellen, Sadie, Alice, Henry, John Jr.

Sitting—Edward Jr., Edward Sr., Alice, John Jr.

Front Row—Maurice, Eleanor, James

## Brief History of the St. Matthews Monohan Family Wildwood Farm

We are very fortunate that Samuel W. Thomas wrote the book *St. Matthews, The Crossroads of Beargrass*, published in 1999. The following information came from his book. We certainly want to give him credit for the following information.

“The part of James Brown’s farm (Wildwood) that included his residence was inherited by his youngest son, Arthur. In 1882, Edward S. Monohan, Sr., acquired the property, and later he would occupy the house. He had come to Louisville with his uncle who raised him, and after graduating from Notre Dame University in 1876, he went to work for the Bank of Kentucky. Monohan acquired a section of Arthur Brown’s land before he obtained the Brown residence site and moved there. Along with his considerable farming interests, he remained deeply involved in banking and was one of the founders of the Bank of St. Matthews as well as the First National bank. He was a director of various banking institutions. In 1894, he helped start the Gardner’s and Farmers’ Market Company, which operated the Haymarket on East Jefferson Street, serving later as president for twenty years. When he died in 1903, his son John, was president of First National Bank.”

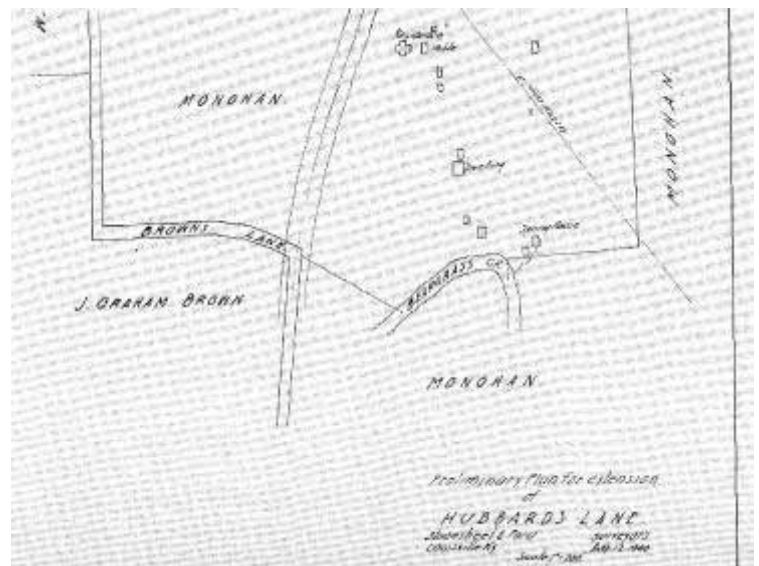
“In 1920, the Monohan family added Theodore brown’s farm to its already considerable holdings.”

“In a move probably designed more to ingratiate then to educate, the Louisville School Board agreed in the fall of 1947 to purchase 34 acres of Monohan property on Browns Lane for \$59,500. Mayme Sweet Waggener school opened seven years later as a junior high school and then expanded into a senior high.



R. E. Ballard Thruston photographed the Filson club’s excursion to Dutch Station on 22 March 1922. In the Background is the Brown/ Monohan family house and the Brown family cemetery. The Filson club.

Samuel W. Thomas, *St. Matthews, The Crossroads of Beargrass*, published in 1999. Plat showing Theodore Brown’s former residence from Preliminary Plan for extension of Hubbards Lane by Stonestreet & Ford, 12 August 1940. Jefferson County Historic Preservation and Archives.



## Brief History of the St. Matthews Monohan Family Wildwood Farm (Monohan Family Homestead)



Aerial Photograph of Monohan  
Farm  
Prior to Interstate 64  
Watterson Expressway bottom  
right



## Henry Apperious Monohan (August 21, 1914 to July 20, 1971)

### Time Line:

1914, August 21, Born on Wildwood Farm in St. Matthews, Kentucky. Youngest of 4 children.

Attended Holy Trinity grade school and St. Xavier High School.

Loved farming, and ran Wildwood Farm for many years.

1931, joined the STMFD as a firefighter and served until 1941.

1939, March 9, he became assistant chief of STMFD.

1940 to 1941, became Assistant Chief of STMFD.

1941, July 9, became Chief of the STMFD for a short period of time.

1941, August 5, Newspaper article: **WANTED MEN!** Henry Monohan, chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department has called a special meeting of the body for Tuesday night August 26, at 7:30 at the fire house. At this meeting Chief Monohan would be glad to interview men over 21 years of age who would like to become members of the crew of firefighters. Men are needed now Mr. Monohan states, and here is a real opportunity for young men to render a worthwhile service to their community.

1952, December, bought a 355 acre farm with 90 cattle with his brother.

1956, became a member of the STMFD Board of Trustees, and served until his death in 1971.

1960's, was a partner in the McDaniel Tractor Company, eventually bought the whole company.

During this time he was also involved with other farm implement businesses.

1967, May 27, Married late in life to Marie Therese Lyons, who died June 19, 1971. They had no children.

Lived at 521 Zorn avenue, Louisville, KY.

1971, July 20, Died at age 56 of a heart attack.



Henry Monohan with  
Jumpsuits, west side of drug  
store by fire house, 1939



About 1940—Raymond “Bud” Young, 1<sup>st</sup>. back row left.  
Henry A. Monohan, middle back row

## Henry Apperious Monohan



## John McKiernan “Jack” Monohan, III

### Time Line:

1937, June 3, Born, St. Matthews, Kentucky. The year his Dad joined STMFD.  
Attended Holy Trinity Grade School.  
1955, Graduated Eastern High School.  
Attended Okalahoma A & M and majored in fire protection engineering, a two-year course.  
Attended Bellarmine University. At Eastern and Bellarmine was a track man running the 440.  
Worked for Kentucky Inspection Bureau for about 1 1/2 years.  
Joined Louisville Ladder Company after the Inspection Bureau, became a vice president and was with them until retirement.  
1951, June 3, Joined the St. Matthews Fire Volunteer Department. (age 14)  
1956, attained rank of Lieutenant (the youngest in the departments history at that time) at age 20.  
1958, May 21, William Kentnor Monohan born to Jack & Judy Monohan.  
1960, moved to 1311 Mill Race Road in Lyndon, gave up his being an officer.  
1963, May 25, Jack married Rose Marilyn Wilson and they lived at 3945 Kennison Avenue..  
1964, January 19, John Stuart Monohan born to Jack & Marilyn Monohan.  
1965, became a Captain on the department.  
1967, April 29, Dana Marie Monohan born to Jack & Marilyn Monohan.  
1974, became Assistant Chief of the department.  
1974, teamed up with Al Ring and started collecting STMFD history for a possible future book on the department.  
1976, October 14: Board meeting, Chief Monohan announced to the board that he would be retiring from the Fire Department in the near future. Along with this announcement he requested that Jack Monohan be appointed as Deputy Chief, and that Frank Florence be appointed Assistant Chief. They would serve until the annual meeting in July 1977. (Jack Monohan declined to be considered for Deputy Chief of the department, and Al Haeberlin was placed in that position.)  
1982, May 13, became member of the Board of Trustees of the STMFD.  
1992, retired from Louisville Ladder.  
1993, June 3, retires from the department and left the board.  
2000, July, Elected again to the Board of Trustees where he still serves today.



May 25, 1963

L to R: Ronnie Brown, Karen Wilson, Kate Vanneste, Marilyn Wilson Monohan, Jack Monohan, Al Haeberlin, Steve Monohan and Doug Monohan.

## John M. “Jack” Monohan, III



John McKiernan Monohan, III (“Jack”)



John Monohan Jr. holding Jack  
1937



John McKiernan Monohan, III  
 (“Jack”)

Jack Monohan married Rose Marilyn Wilson on May 25, 1963



William Kentnor Monohan born  
May 21, 1958 (Left)

John Stuart Monohan born Janu-  
ary 19, 1964 (Right)

Dana Marie Monohan born April  
29, 1967 (Center)





## John M. “Jack” Monohan, III

**April 14, 1960: *The Voice of St. Matthews:* The Volunteers—**Jack Monohan has one hobby: **firefighting:** Volunteer fireman Jack Monohan, of 1311 Mill Race Road, is a St. Matthews man through and through. He was born in St. Matthews and attended Holy Trinity and Eastern High school. And he comes from a firefighting family. “I grew up with it,” He said. “My father (Chief John Monohan) has been at it for years and my grandfather was a volunteer firemen for the City of Louisville. (Note: article says this) My uncle (Henry Monohan) was a volunteer in St. Matthews for years. He’s now on the board of directors of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. It’s in the family. I feel like it will be the same with my boys.”

Though only 23 he’s married and has three sons. (Note 2 sons one daughter) Not only is he one of the youngest men in the department, he was the youngest Lieutenant in its history. He attained that rank at the age of 20 and held it two years.

“I’m not an officer any more. I resigned a year ago when I moved from Nanz Avenue to Mill Race. I felt like it was a little too far away.”

Jack attended Oklahoma A & M and majored in fire protection engineering, a two-year course. He then attended Bellarmine University. He is now a sales engineer and purchasing agent for Louisville Ladder Company.

Asked what else he belonged to besides the St. Matthews Volunteers, he said, “I don’t belong to any other club or organization. I devote all my free time to the fire department.”

He was a track man at Eastern and Bellarmine University, running the 440. He still does a lot of running, as he answers fire calls by the Lyndon, Louisville and St. Matthews Departments.

“The fires that stick with me are the ones that don’t make the headlines,” he said. “I like the ones we’re able to save with little or no damage.”

**Jack’s personality comes out in this article: June 4, 1966: Firemen fetter groom with ball and chain,** by Glee Durand Crutcher. It’s like something out of U.N.C.L.E. But as far as the St. Matthews Volunteer firemen know to date, rescue was impossible for Buddy Klapheke and he’s been staggering around dragging a heavy ball and chain since last Saturday.

That’s when Buddy was married to Karen Wilson in St. Albert The Great Church. All his fellow firemen came to the reception with a fiendish scheme for the unlucky bridegroom. **Jack Monohan was the main perpetrator.**

Buddy’s cronies arrived with a large concrete ball and chain, which they padlocked to his ankle. The padlock was carefully chosen. It’s made of steel that cannot be cut with a hacksaw. Then the fiendish firemen presented Karen with a gift-wrapped box containing 280 keys and a card reading. “This will give you something to do on your honeymoon.”

For the past five days, Buddy’s friends have been chuckling gleefully, with visions of Karen working her way through the box of keys trying to set her new husband free, because they’ve known all the time that the right key was not in the box.

Karen’s sister and brother-in-law, Marlene and Jerry Hodge, took the bride and groom to various locksmiths without success before winding up at an automotive repair shop and having the device removed. It’s hoped that there still are some bachelors among the volunteer firemen in St. Matthews, because Buddy undoubtedly already is plotting some heinous deed for the next one who marches to the altar to get even.

1946, Jack playing firefighter with two neighborhood friends.



## John M. “Jack” Monohan, III



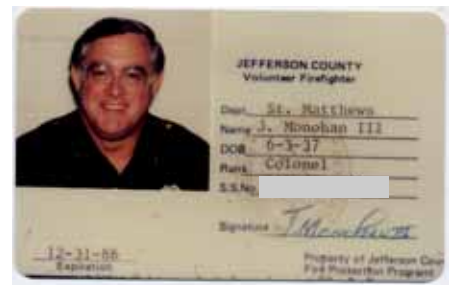
1960



1961



1974



Jack Monohan 1950s (standing in both pictures)



Jack Monohan with one of his “toys”



**NOTE:** Jack and Al Ring collected a huge amount of information on the department in 1974. However as with many things in life time got in the way and their best intentions just didn't get accomplished. That information is now part of this collection.



L to R: Bill Andriot Jr., Tim Golden, Jack Monohan, Joe Noland, , Bill Andriot, III. 1974 Crusade Waterball contest.



## John M. “Jack” Monohan, III



ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER Fire Department assistant chief John Monohan III, left, and Chief Al Haerberlin give George M. O'Bryan an estimate of the damage caused by a fire at his house,

4224 Churchill Road, Wednesday afternoon. No one was injured, but the house sustained heavy smoke and fire damage on the second floor and water damage on the first floor.

staff photo by BOB OWEN

1982



1982



Apartment Fire on Marshall Drive, Assistant Chief Jack Monohan in command, 1987



Jack Monohan with daughter Dana, 2006



Jack driving Betsy June 2007 in Holy Trinity parish parade celebrating 125th year.

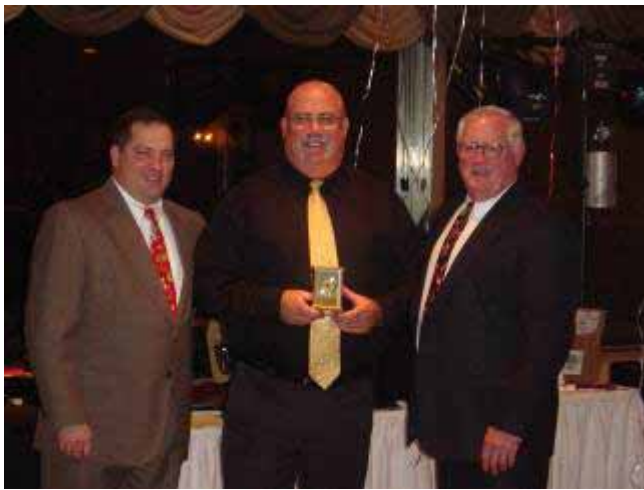
## John M. “Jack” Monohan, III



Denny Engnehl & Faye Ellerkamp, The Eifler's, and Marilyn & Jack Monohan, 2002



Kent, Stuart & Jack Monohan, 2002



Stuart, Kent & Jack Monohan, 2003



Jack in the “food” line, 2003



Jack & Al Ring at 2004 Reunion



Jack with Reunion committee on 2004 Reunion



## John M. “Jack” Monohan, III

2001 STMFD Reunion:



Melch Zehnder, Denny Engnehl, Marilyn Monohan,  
Tim Golden



Jack with firefighters and wives



Chief Seng, with former Chief's Haeberlin  
& Florence and Jack



Jack with Franklin Florence



Jack with Gar Davis



Jack & son Kent

# Douglas Lewis Monohan

### Time Line:

1943, September 18 Born

1949-1957 Holy Trinity Grade School

1957-1961 Trinity High School

1961—1967 Bellarmine University

1966, April 16, married Marguerite (Margo) McHugh Tabler

1966—1990, employed by General Electric Major Appliance Division.

1967, March 1, Douglas McKiernan (Kiernan) Monohan born to Doug & Margo.

1969, became Lieutenant on the STMFD Department.

1970, July 29, Kelly McHugh Monohan born to Doug & Margo.

1970, April 12, 50th Anniversary and the dedication of their new headquarters of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire department. A new \$250,000 facility. "In a speech, Monohan spoke of the past and present of the St. Matthews Volunteer firefighters, who first incorporated for service back in 1919."

“With the dedication of our new headquarters, a long-standing dream has come true,” said Doug Monohan, who was in charge of the dedication ceremonies. He was assisted by Melchior Zehnder.”

“According to Doug Monohan, about 500 people attended the dedication ceremonies and open house.

“Cactus” Tom Brooks of WHAS was master of ceremonies.”

1973, Daniel Graham Monohan born to Doug & Margo.

1974, became Captain on the STMFD Department.

1974, became school director for a new Fire Fighting school planned by Firefighters Inc. "Monohan said the four Schools planned include classes in fighting liquid and gas fires, high rise building fires, and aircraft fires and rescues. Each will be taught by a professional firefighter who is tops in his specialized field, Monohan said."

1974, September Doug and Margo moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, Doug went inactive from STMFD.

1976, February Doug and Margo moved to Atlanta, Georgia.

1991, January General Electric closed the distribution center Doug was running ending his career with General Electric.

1991, Executive Vice President of Stop Industries, then directed the Logistics/Distribution arm of Rhodes Furniture Company.

1998, retired at the youthful age of 55.

1999-2000, President: Habitat for Humanity, Gwinnett County, Georgia.

Doug's toy—nick-named “Maxine,” by Dana Monohan, when her father Jack Monohan found it in central Indiana and began its restoration in 1994.



## Doug's Badges



**December 1968:** Firefighter Doug Monohan & son Kiernan “enjoying the fire house.”



## Douglas Lewis Monohan



April 16, 1966—Doug & Margo Wedding  
Left to Right: Stephen Monohan, Susan Tabler, Mary Ann Boldrick, Biggs Tabler, Mary  
Matt Monohan Laidlaw, Jack Monohan



Spring 1988, “The Monohan’s”, Kiernan 21, Kelly 18, Graham 15 & Doug & Margo

## Douglas Lewis Monohan

April 28, 1975:

Letter to Al Ring from Doug Monohan

Captain Alan D. Ring, St. Matthews Vol. Fire Dept., 4414 Lyndon Way, Louisville 7, Ky. 40207  
Good Evening;

Alan, if I may, I have addressed this letter to you for two reasons. One (1) You are the Departmental chairman for the Crusade for Children, and two (2) I consider you a close personal friend who has been largely responsible for our success in this fund raising drive. If I may take this opportunity to address the entire group, I would be most appreciative.

There are times, often too late, when an individual realizes and appreciates the many things which others take for granted. I speak now of the Crusade For Children. This year will be the first Crusade I have not participated in since I was 17 years old. I now fall into this classification of being an individual who has realized just how great an opportunity at I had, and you now have, to really do something worthwhile for that segment of our society which must totally depend on responsible adults, namely Children.

I sincerely regret any comment I may have made which colored me as an opponent to this Fund Drive. The Crusade will mean long hours, sore feet and backs, many hours away from your families, girlfriends or whatever, and also an extreme effort from each one of you to maintain your dignity and your sense of humor. Of course there will be those who will invent excuses to be absent. These individuals don't deserve to be classified in the same group as the PRIDE BOYS from ST. MATTHEWS. They're not in your league and don't deserve to be classified as such.

Having moved away from the county only recently I believe I am able to compare the trees in the forest a little better than some of you who are still living in the forest. You are members of an elite group who are often called upon to bare the responsibilities that others don't want. Everyone likes to be a winner or be associated with a winner. By your example in the past you have exemplified yourselves in the finest way. You have brought a winning tradition to the department, but what is more important, is you——yourselves, each one of you, have put the necessary effort forward in performing a community orientated task that offers little in the way of a reward but offers you an extreme sense of personal satisfaction. I can only add these last few words of encouragement. Give them HELL and ride again to Memorial Auditorium as No. 1.

I am sorry I will not be able to be with you, but I am equally sure that my colleague who took over as Captain of the quint will again ride the high seat of distinction and collect more than any other Company. He too has a tradition to uphold. And that is, The crew of S-5 has never been beaten in this contest since before Major Monohan rode at its helm. I'm sure Capt. Rakestraw will give every officer a sporting chance however.

PS; Russell if you blow tradition I will personally kick your ass.

Best of luck and keep your heads down.

*Doug*



**January 19, 1973:** The Younger Women's Club of St. Matthews donated a **"Jaws of Life"** rescue unit to the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. It cost the club \$3,825.00. A demonstration of the unit at the fall conference of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs showed the club members the great uses the tool has.



## Douglas Lewis Monohan

**Al Ring sent this letter to Kelly, (Doug Monohan's daughter) for his 60th birthday roast.**

Kelly, Great to hear from you. Well the big 60 for your dad, how wonderful. I should kick him because he forgot we are close to the same age and I gracefully, without any fan fair, moved into the 60 column July 17 this year.

You are right Doug did provide us all with lots of stories, a few years back, but writing about them is not easy, especially for someone like me who can't spell, or tell a story. Lets see there's the time he was making a fire run and was backing out his own driveway (hadn't gone 15 feet) and smashed into Margo's car which was parked in the driveway behind him. Now that was a good move. Shows the type of level headed, calm, dedicated firefighters we had at that time.

I guess the one that I enjoyed the most was: This would have been in 1972, a Tuesday night, Doug and myself were Lieutenant's on the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. I and Capt. Harry Babcock (he a story in himself) were in charge of "Live Fire Training" that night. (For those of you who aren't firefighters that's when firefighters get to do what they love best, start a fire and then fight it.) Doug was in charge of a class of recruits. About a mile and a half from the fire station was the J. Graham Brown Estate. Mr. Brown had died, and the estate was being broken up and the "mansions, large house" was donated to the fire department for training and final disposal. (That means burning down for fun and training.) Harry and I went early to set the stage for training. We stacked a pile of old car tires in two separate rooms, lit them on fire, making sure all windows were closed and waited for a pretty good fire to get going. (This creates lots of smoke for live fire training.) We called the station and reported the "training fire" and they sent the recruits under command of Lieutenant Monohan to handle this fire. I should mention here that the rest of the department was training at the station, having stripped all the equipment off the other fire apparatus for inventory and cleaning.

Doug's crew responded and reported a working fire and donned Scott Packs. (self contained breathing apparatus) and entered the building with the proper lines to fight the fire. After a respectable time Doug declared the situation under control and had his crew leave the building

Babcock and myself were about 40 feet down the front walk when Doug with his men walking single file behind him with smiles on their dirty face's (the truth is they looked like a mother duck with her little ones walking behind) walked up to us to report the situation. Doug reported finding two separate fires and making an aggressive attack on both fires and was pleased to report they were both out. I look at Doug and just pointed, back over his head and said only—look up.

Doug turns and looks up and saw that the entire sky is black. Black smoke billowing from a very hot, very large, very deep seated fire in the attic area of the structure. There are just no words to describe the look on his face, it was priceless. Whether or not he did something in his pants I never did find out, because we all got busy real quick.

County Alarm, the alarm company for reporting fires, called at this time and reported the switchboard was jammed with calls of a huge fire in the East end. We told them we were aware of the situation and would handle it. We then called our station to see if we could get some help. We were advised of the situation of the other apparatus, and we had to explain to the Chief (Doug's father) it didn't much matter what shape they were in get over here and get over here now. They had to respond under emergency conditions, as well as fight traffic from the hundreds and hundreds of spectators that showed up. (This is not an exaggeration.)

Several hours later after one hell of a training fire and the use of all our men and equipment we were cleaning up at the fire station, joking, talking about what happened, etc. Doug asked me how that fire could have gotten in the attic and spread so fast.

I had to tell him that Harry and I had used pike poles to cut holes in the ceiling directly above both fires just so it would spread to the attic. There was no way they could have seen the holes with the smoke so black. But truth is Doug was not expecting this, he was told one or two rooms of fire no more. In real firefighting, this is exactly what happens and how fire spreads so fast, it just wasn't expected in this training fire, with new recruits.

To this day, 31 years later I can still see the "ducks" walking down the walk with that overconfident smile on their faces for a job well done, and then the faces as they turned and saw the sky. I also never did find out about any conversation between Doug and his Dad, I would have like to have seen that. If you ever knew his Dad you would know why.

Well Kelly that's about all I can say. I hope this fits what you and Margo want. We should roast Margo some time. Lots of stories about her locking herself OUT and IN the house, and I had to respond. But that's another story.

Happy birthday Doug, update me sometime. Al Ring

## Douglas Lewis Monohan



Doug, Margo and Karen Ring, 2001 Reunion



Bill Andriot and Doug, 2001 Reunion



Doug & Margo 2001 Reunion looking at his-  
tory information of the STMFD



Doug & Margo, Jack & Marilyn at Borders for  
signing of the new Fire History book, 2004



2004 Reunion, Doug, Karen Ring and Margo, Margo and Doug



## Douglas Lewis Monohan



Doug's Toy

"Maxie," — nick-named by Dana Monohan, when her father Jack Monohan found it in central Indiana and began its restoration in 1994.



## William Kentnor “Kent” Monohan

### Time Line:

1958, May 21, William Kentnor Monohan born to Jack & Judy Monohan.  
Attended Holy Trinity Grade School, grades 1-3  
Attended Greathouse Elementary School, grades 4-6  
Attended Waggener High School, grades 7-12  
1976, Graduated Waggener High School  
1976, September, joined St. Matthews Fire Protection District – as a volunteer.  
1977— Grandfather (Chief John M. Monohan, Jr.) retired from STMFD.  
1982, September 25, married Virginia Ann Banet (Ginny).  
1984, March, 8, Robert McKiernan Monohan (Robbie) born to Kent and Ginny Monohan.  
1986, December 16, Kenton Michael Monohan (Michael) born to Kent and Ginny Monohan.  
1987, May 18, hired on as career firefighter/emt at STMFD.  
Rose through the ranks of Firefighter, Sergeant and Lieutenant.  
1995, received Medal for Valor.  
1999, August, became the Training Officer for the Harrods Creek Fire District.  
2000, November, returned to St. Matthews Fire Protection District as a Captain, currently assigned to engine 2631.  
Was charter member of the Jefferson County Water Rescue Team as Chief Training Instructor.  
2001, summer, son, Robbie, became fire explorer at Harrods Creek.  
2002, May, son Robbie graduated Our Lady of Providence High School.  
2002, July 9, son Robbie enlisted in United States Air Force – (currently stationed at Dyess Air Base in Texas).  
2004, Received Mayor’s Citation – (Highest award given by mayor)  
2005, Received Mayor’s Citation –  
2005, Firefighter of the Year  
2006, received Governor’s Award of Excellence – (Highest award given by governor)  
2007, April 31, retired from St. Matthews Fire Protection District.  
2007, June 1, rehired to St. Matthews Fire Protection District, retained rank of Captain.

**November 22, 2006: *The Voice-Tribune*, Kent Monohan**-St. Matthews Fire Department. A third generation firefighter, Kent joined St. Matthews Fire Department in 1996. He was instrumental in the founding of the Jefferson County Water Rescue Team and served as its initial Lead Training Officer for 2 ½ years.

Kent is married to the former Virginia Banet and has two sons, Robbie and Michael. Robbie is currently serving in the Air Force and Michael has ambitions to extend the Monohan legacy to the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of firefighters.



### Comments about Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. by Kent Monohan

What can I say? I’m the grandson of a legend! Many people knew “The Chief” by many titles...”The Chief”, “Chief Nine Wrinkles”, the “old Man” and “Ironsides” were but a few, but I was one of only two people in the fire service that had a different name for him...he was Papa John, my grandfather! Growing up was far from the everyday “normal”! I grew up thinking everyone had red lights and a siren on their cars or trucks. At one point and time there were three firefighters living at home, my grandfather, my father and my uncle. Talk about excitement when the tones went off, the driveway could be a dangerous place!

If memory serves, my grandfather was on St. Matthews for 41 years and “The Chief” for 36. You often could find “The Chief” standing in the corner of the bay, taking in everything around. He didn’t talk much, and when he did it was more of a ‘grunt’, but everyone knew what he meant and what he wanted done.... AND right now, not later! The building was always clean, the apparatus spotless. All evidence of the pride we all felt towards our calling. With “The Chief” leading, we all wanted to follow!



## William Kentnor “Kent” Monohan



October 1968, Stuart, Dana and  
Kent Monohan



2001 Reunion, with Margo Monohan



2001  
Reunion



2003



# John Stuart Monohan

## Time Line:

1964, January 19, John Stuart Monohan born to Jack & Marilyn Monohan.  
1970, attended Greathouse Elementary to 4.  
1974, attended Holy Trinity School 5 to 8.  
1981, joined St. Matthews Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter in December.  
1982, graduated Trinity High School 9 to 12.  
1983, attended Jefferson Community College fire science program.  
1984, hired as a career firefighter at STMFD.  
1984, certified as an EMT.  
1985, awarded St. Matthews Firefighter of the Year.  
1986, August 9, Married to Mary Kay Scott of Prospect KY.  
1987, promoted to Sergeant.  
1989, promoted to Captain.  
1989, September 19, first child born, Ellen Monohan.  
1992, February 11, second child born, Megan Monohan.  
2000, promoted to Assistant Fire Chief.  
2002, March 23, third child born, Henry Monohan.  
2003, retired December.  
2004, rehired February.

## Comments about Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. by Stuart Monohan

My first thought about my grandfather is that of a very quiet, very intimidating person. I can remember working a summer job in Jeffersontown and getting rides home in the afternoons with him. I would look forward to riding with him because it gave me a few minutes of one on one time that few had. I really love thinking about him and listening to others tell stories about him. I'm very proud to be included in his legacy. I only wish I had more time as an adult to discuss things with him.

For a guy who rarely spoke, I was able to get him going several times each year. It usually took no more than two questions about family or the St. Matthews area history to get him talking. I really really enjoyed those talks. I wish I'd done more and even recorded some of them.

I never walk out in front of the fire station with out looking at the plaque on the front of the building and saying a little hello to him. When ever a repair or major project is going on around station one I always think about my grandfather building this place. I sometimes think he's watching me and that I need to make sure I take care of this place like he would want it. I've been involved with a lot of capital projects over my twenty five years on the department and some of my grandfathers ideas and influence are still here.



Stuart Monohan playing with fire truck  
1964-5



Henry S. Monohan, son of  
Stuart Monohan  
Playing on Grandpa Jack  
Monohan's 1921 Stutz  
Ladder Truck



## John Stuart Monohan



Ray Voll of the St. Matthews Kiwanis showed the Firefighter of the Year Award to Stuart Monohan (center), this year's winner, while Chief Franklin Florence looked on.

**May 1, 1991: *New Voice*, by Ken Hardin: St. Matthews district firefighters pick one of their own for honor.** Captain Stuart Monohan of the St. Matthews Fire Protection District hasn't won any popularity contests, at least not according to him or his boss.

What Monohan has won is designation as St. Matthews Firefighter of the Year, an honor given him by his fellow volunteer and career firefighters.

I think you'd have to say this award was based on what the firefighters saw as his year-round commitment; this certainly wasn't a popularity contest," said Franklin Florence, chief of the St. Matthews District, which serves about 20 East End cities.

This was the first year the entire crew of about 40 paid and volunteer firefighters decided the award. The winner traditionally has been selected by the chief and his officers on behalf of the St. Matthews Kiwanis, the awards sponsor.

"It means a lot, because it came from the guys. That made it special," said Monohan, who joined the force as a volunteer in 1982 on his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. "I don't think it was a personality thing; I do try to give a lot to the district and I think the other firefighters appreciate that."

Monohan, who has been a paid member of the St. Matthews district since 1984, is active in public safety education and other projects, Florence said. He is also in charge of maintenance of Fire Station No. 1 on Sears Avenue and is responsible for helping train personnel. As a fire company officer, he is in charge of a vehicle, a sergeant and another firefighter.

Monohan was voted Officer of the Year at last fall's district award banquet. The Firefighter of the Year is selected from the winners of the officer, career and volunteer categories.

The award was presented to Monohan at an April 30 Kiwanis banquet. Along with a plaque, he received gift certificates to local stores.

The Kiwanis have been sponsoring the firefighters award and another for St. Matthews police officers since 1982 to help support community involvement, said Ray Voll, head of the organization's firefighter award committee.

Voll said the Kiwanis used to select the award winner themselves, but decided to turn over that chore to the more knowledgeable fire chief. The fire district is a perfect arena for the Kiwanis involvement, he said, because it gives them a chance to recognized the efforts of volunteers in the community.

For Monohan, beginning his career as a volunteer was something of a family affair. His grandfather, John M. Monohan Jr., was the fire chief for 36 years. His father, John M. Monohan III, is now volunteer assistant chief, and his brother and two uncles are also on the force.





## John Stuart Monohan



March 11, 1998



2002



2000



2003



2003





# Michael Monohan

## Time Line:

1986, December 16, Kenton Michael Monohan (Michael) born to Kent and Ginny Monohan.  
Attended Bridgepoint Elementary School in Jeffersonville, IN, grades 1-5.  
Attended Parkview Middle School in Jeffersonville, IN, grades 6-8.  
Attended Jeffersonville High School, grades 9-12.  
2005, May, graduated Jeffersonville High School.  
2005, December 14, joined St. Matthews Fire Protection District—as a volunteer.  
2006, August, graduated from Recruit School.  
2007, April 30, hired as intern at St. Matthews Fire Protection District.  
2007, June 11, hired as full-time career firefighter/EMT, currently assigned to Quint 2658 under the supervision of Capt. Wolfe.

Michael became 4<sup>th</sup> generation of Monohan's serving at St. Matthews Fire Protection District. Although Robbie my brother, served at Harrods Creek F. D. and not here at St. Matthews, he and Michael are the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of BROTHERS to be firefighters!



Michael Monohan in Grandfather Jack Monohan's Model A Chief's Carr. 2006



Michael Monohan



Jack Monohan with grandson Michael Monohan (son of Kent Monohan).



Michael Monohan at Station One  
September 2007

## **John M. Monohan, Jr. (November 26, 1911 to July 12, 1999)**

### **Time Line:**

1911, November 26, Born on Wildwood Farm in St. Matthews, Kentucky.  
Lifelong member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.  
Attended Holy Trinity Catholic school.  
Graduated from St. Xavier High School.  
Attended University of Louisville Speed School.  
Followed his fathers footsteps for a short period of time working for the First National Bank of Louisville.  
1936, May 27, Married Katherine Marcilliat, who was born September 20, 1913, and they lived at 3909 Elmwood Avenue.  
1937, March, Joined STMFD as a firefighter.  
1937, June 3, John M. (Jack) Monohan, III born to John and Katherine.  
1937, September Holy Trinity church burned down to the foundation.  
1938, John and Katherine moved to 3909 Elmwood Avenue, in St. Matthews.  
1940, Mary M. Monohan a daughter was born to John and Katherine.  
1940/1941, served as Captain on the STMFD.  
1941, December 29, Stephen O. Monohan born to John and Katherine.  
1941, February 12, Became member of the Board of Trustees serving until 1982.  
1941, April 25, John Monohan, Jr. on the building committee got board approval for new fire house to replace the old one in the same location.  
1941, July 18, became President of the Board of Trustees.  
1941, September, he became Chief of STMFD, and served in that position until 1977.  
1942, he worked for the Reynolds Metal Company and eventually became Plant Superintendent of Louisville Plant 15.  
1943, the rear part of the Ford Agency building was destroyed by fire.  
1943, September 18, Douglas Lewis Monohan born to John and Katherine.  
1945, the A & P Grocery burned, which was located across from the Vogue theater.  
1950, received a 1947 Seagrave 750 GPM pumper.  
1952, December, bought a 355 acre farm with 90 cattle with his brother, Henry.  
1952, moved into new fire station at 117 St. Matthews Avenue.  
1953, he became President of Firefighters Inc. a county wide association of fire departments.  
1954, March, STMFD new radio equipment was installed on the fire apparatus.  
1954, received a new \$23,500, 750 GPM Seagrave Quad.  
1954, December, the STMFD started collecting for the Muscular Dystrophy Fund and this spirit of collecting and helping the community eventually turned into their collecting for the Crusade For Children which the department continues today.  
1957, received a new 750 GPM Seagrave Quint with a 75' aerial ladder.  
1960, September 5, major fire at Variety Mill, 3640 Brownsboro Road.  
1961, December 13, the board gave Chief Monohan permission to buy five Motorola Mobile units for the apparatus.  
1961, he oversaw the construction of an addition on the Fire station at 117 St. Matthews avenue, A four room addition with living space was added at a projected price of \$20,000 to \$25,000 dollars.  
1963, received a 1250 GPM Seagrave pumper.  
1965, April 10, major fire at Minnish & Potts Florists, 110 Fairmeade Road.  
1965, July 15, major fire at Ballerina, 139 Breckenridge Lane.  
1966, May 14, major fire at Jamestown Apartments on Breckenridge Lane.  
1966, two major fires at Palmer Ball, 146 St. Matthews Avenue.  
1969, March 5, major fire at Marshall Planing Mill, 1 fatality of worker.  
1969, November 24, major fire at Jamestown Apartments, Breckenridge Lane.  
1970, April 12, 50th Anniversary and the dedication of their new headquarters at 4114 Lyndon Way, of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire department. A new \$250,000 facility. "How is today's service? While Monohan emphasizes that he'd like to have more men close at hand during the regular working-week day, he is quick to stress that the department has never missed an alarm. He also notes that neighboring departments, including that of the City of Louisville, cooperates if assistance is needed in a major fire."

## **John M. Monohan, Jr.**

“Another test of the department’s status is insurance rates. A St. Matthews resident has fire-insurance rates comparable to his Louisville neighbor, Monohan said.”

“Monohan takes obvious pride in the department. While he will quip, with a smile, about “the illness that makes a man get out of bed on a cold night to answer an alarm,” his pride comes through when he talks about the men or displays his down-to-the finest detail knowledge of the department or its history.”

1971, July 9, major fire at Greathouse School, 3930 Grandview Road.

1972, Lieutenant Al Ring designed and Chief John Monohan participated in a major recruiting program using the slogan “Chief Monohan Wants You.” The *Voice-Jeffersonian* and WSTM-FM helped in the recruiting campaign.

1972, October 31, major fire at Country Day school, Browns Lane.

1972, December 11, Tragically, Stephen O. Monohan his son died.

1973, received a 1500 GPM Mack Pumper.

1974, received 2 1500 GPM Mack pumpers

1974, April 3, lead department through Louisville’s worst Tornado.

1975, April 10, honored with “Magic 70” plaque, denoting combined age and years of fire fighting experience have totaled 70.

Worked at Dispensers Optical for short period of time.

After retiring from Reynolds in his late 70’s he went with Raque Food Systems—a Manufacturing Company.

1976, October 19, Chief Monohan announces to firefighters that he will be retiring in July 1977.

1976, major fire at Nanz & Kraft Florists.

1977, July 13, Retired as Chief of the STMFD, while still serving on the Board of Trustees. Was made an Honoree member of the board.

1982, June 10, told the Board of Trustees that he would not be available for re-election in July for the Board of Trustees.

1991, February 10, Katherine M. Monohan died.

1999, July 12, John M. Monohan, Jr. died at age 87 at Pine Tree Villa Nursing Home. Buried at Calvary Cemetery.

**Nick Names: Nine Wrinkles, Pump Handle, Old Man, Ironsides**

**His feeling of accomplishment during his service: “Steady growth. That’s been the biggest accomplishment of this department. We’ve tried to grow faster than the community so we can provide adequate fire protection at all times.”**



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (Early & 1932)



John M. Monohan, Jr.  
1932

Sadie Michel Apperious Monohan, Mary Ellen Monohan (top left), John M. Monohan, Jr. (right side), Alice O. Monohan, Henry A. Monohan



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1930's)



John M. Monohan, Jr. 1930s



Henry Monohan (center) and John Monohan, Jr. (right) with cousin Tom Monohan (left)



John McKiernan Monohan, Jr. (left) 1930s

## **John M. Monohan, Jr. (May 27, 1936)**

John McKiernan Monohan, Jr. married Anna Katherine Marcilliat on May 27, 1936.

This marriage produced four children:

1. John McKiernan Monohan, III ("Jack") was born June 3, 1937
2. Mary Mattingly Monohan was born July 2, 1940
3. Stephen O'Ferrall Monohan was born on December 29, 1941
4. Douglas Lewis Monohan was born on September 18, 1943



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1939)



Left to right, Henry Monohan, Marty Kamer, Unknown in dress hat, Rich Herdt, Sr., Unknown, John M. Monohan Jr. Believe to be 1939.



**John Monohan with Jump-suit, west side of drug store by fire house, 1939.**

**1939: Coveralls Are Uniforms To St. Matthews Firemen:** From left to right: Henry Monohan, M. A. Kamer, Chief R. M. Young, Rudy Lineback and Cliff Feierbend

Even when attired in their Sunday best the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department must make all fire calls – and quickly. Sometimes it was pretty hard on a man's suit even a two-pants suit so the fire ladies ordered some protective uniforms.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1940)



L to R: H. A. Monohan right standing, J. M. Monohan Jr. driving, R. A. Young standing.



From left to right: John Feierbend, Captain John M. Monohan, Jr., Chief Raymond Young, Assistant Chief Henry Monohan, William Leitsch, Richard Herdt Sr., Lieutenant Marty Kamer, George Wurster, and Bernard Handel. Fire house at 109 Breckinridge Lane. Betsy on the left, White Salvage Wagon on the right.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1945—1948)

**August 24, 1945: *St. Matthews Sun*: John Monohan Talks at Rotary Luncheon.** John Monohan president of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department was guest speaker at the regular luncheon meeting of the St. Matthews Rotary Club, Wednesday, at the Beargrass Christian Church.

The matter of local fire protection and the manner in which citizens can cooperate to make the fire department effective was stressed by Monohan, who told the club that he was certain that a reduction in fire insurance rates can be obtained before long because of increased service by the volunteer department.

A new fire house is an urgent need, said Monohan, who urged every citizen to cooperate in securing modern quarters and adequate equipment.



1948—John, Mary Matt, Katherine, Doug, Steve and Jack

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1950/1951)

### 1950, Solicitation Letter:

The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association is soliciting your subscription for \$3.00 for Association Membership for the next twelve months.

Paid-up members of the Association are given fire protection by the Fire-Department on call without further charges at any time and as frequently as needed. Non members, should they be so unfortunate as to have a fire, will be charged for the use of the fire equipment at a maximum rate of \$100.00 for the first hour or any part thereof and \$25.00 for each additional hour thereafter.

Some who have received this letter have been withholding sending their checks due to the annexation proceedings which are now in court. Please bear in mind that it may be six months to three years before we are completely annexed and the City of Louisville places fire equipment in the St. Matthews area to take care of your home. Therefore, the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association must maintain this department until such a day as proper equipment and men are furnished by the city, should we be completely annexed, to take care of any catastrophes. We cannot successfully maintain this department without the help of the subscribers.

We urge you to send your subscription in promptly to avoid charge on an hourly basis due to non—payment.

Your subscription may be paid to any of these convenient locations:

FRANKEL OBRECHT DRUG CO., 3820 Frankfort Ave.  
TERRY'S TEXACO SERVICE STATION, Lexington Road and Wallace  
WHITEHEAD-KEANEY DRUG STORE, 3900 Frankfort Ave.  
or to the Post Office Box shown above.

JOHN M. MONOHAN, JR., President.

*We are obligated to serve only those contributing to the support of the Association.*

**August 9, 1951: Board meeting:** Directors present, Louis Schweitzer, Leland Wilson, John M. Monohan, Jr., Prentiss Terry, Marty Kamer, Joseph Zehnder and George E. Miller. Monohan authorized to offer for us \$9,500.00, or if not accepted, to offer \$10,000.00 for the property at 117 St. Matthews Avenue, 50 x 150 feet. If this is not accepted, he is to offer \$9,500.00 for property at 129 St. Matthews Avenue – 50 x 128 feet.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1951)



Left to right bottom, standing: Ray Wilson, Joe Kempf, Marty Kamer, Rich Herdt, John Cauthorn, Rich Herdt, Sr., Charlie Haun.

Left to right at the top: John Westerman, George Westwood, John Monohan, Jr., Jim Sauer, Ed Foley, Jim Brenzel, J. P. Terry, "Jughead" Blake.

Apparatus S1.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1952)



MEMBERS OF THE ST. MATTHEWS  
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Fire Prevention Week -

**Bottom row:** Allan McNalley, George Westwood, Pete Blackwell, Marty Rueff & Al Haeberlin.

**Middle row:** Phil Schneider, Billy Smith, Jr., Dan Sullivan, Jr., John Kaster, Denny Engnehl, Bob Brenzel & Melvin Schrode.

**Top row:** William Medina, Jim Weixler, Wells Meyer, Unknown, Unknown, Melch Zehnder, John M. Monohan, Jr., Dick Wheeler, Jack Monohan, Ed Foley, Marty Kamer & Joe Kempf.



Chief John M. Monohan. 1952

The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association  
Invites You to Attend Its

# OPEN HOUSE

at its new building, at 117 St. Matthews Ave.

**SUNDAY, OCT. 26** 2:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

Fire  
insurance  
savings  
helped build  
our fine new  
building

YES! That's right. Without the  
St. Matthews Volunteer Fire  
Association's fire insurance  
you would be paying 25 to 30  
percent more for your fire  
coverage. You're ready to re-  
ceive. And get this: YOUR  
new building. Come out Sun-  
day, 2:30 to 8:30 P.M. You  
won't be sorry. It's a new  
Volunteer Fireman and  
Fireman's Home.

Phone 441-1000. J. E.  
Terry, George Miller, John  
Wilson, Louis Schweitzer, John  
Monahan, Jr., "Burr" Nantz,  
and Fred G. Boss.



In case of fire, dial "0" and ask for St. Matthews Fire Dept.

## Subscribe Now to the Fire Dept. Fund

Your whole full cooperation through annual subscription to the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Dept. Fund, plus a small amount of county taxes, has built and equipped this modern fire department. All members VOLUNTEER their services; no one is paid. That's why the annual subscription fee is only \$3.00 minimum. But we must have the co-operation of EVERY property owner in the St. Matthews area. **SUBSCRIBE NOW!**

Fire Call Minimum Charge To Non-Subscribers, \$25

**\$300**  
MINIMUM  
PER YEAR

ENROLL SUNDAY AT OUR OPEN HOUSE — OR MAKE PAYMENT AT

Terry's Texaco  
Ashbury-Berman Drug

Frankel's Drugs  
Colonial Federal Savings & Loan

or mail checks to P.O. Box 115, Louisville 7, Ky.

*Support the Fire Dept. That Fights Your Fires!*

## ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

JOHN M. MONOHAN, Chief

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS — John M. Monohan, president; E. L. Wilson, vice-president; Fred Boss, treasurer; George Miller, secretary; J. E. Terry, Martin Komar, Louis Schweitzer, Joe Zehnder.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1952)

**October 23, 1952: *The Voice of St. Matthews:* St. Matthews Volunteer Firemen Hold Open House Sunday In New Modern Building.** Knock on Wood! But with no serious fire since 1945, the Greater St. Matthews area has more than one good reason for turning out Sunday to help the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association observe Open House in its brand new headquarters building at 117 St. Matthews Avenue.

With fingers crossed, and hoping for continued good luck, the volunteer department isn't asking for a community pat on the back. Rather, the 35 active members, the officers, and the directors simply want the public to visit the new fire house, inspect the modern equipment, and realize that it takes community support in terms of cash to carry on and to continue to improve service and facilities.

"Dues are due," they say, for every property owner within the three mile radius that the St. Matthews firemen serve. The minimum subscription is \$3.00.

With several "firsts" to its credit, the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association has received recognition as one of the largest, most-efficient, and best equipped volunteer departments in Kentucky.

But it wasn't always so.

Although it is the oldest volunteer department in Jefferson county, it started in a very humble manner with its incorporation as an association in December, 1919.

**Started With Model T:** Its equipment consisted of one Model T Ford Truck, which was housed in the part of the Eline Chevrolet building that is now occupied by Morgan's Men's Shop and Clay's 5¢ & 10¢. Later, it was moved to A. L. Hansen's paint shop, then located where Martin's Grocery is now.

Young and ambitious to improve its facilities, the Association in 1923 and 1924 built its own building on Breckinridge Lane, the building which is now occupied by Linebach's Shoe Service. When completed, the Model T. truck moved in.

At that time, Jesse Ogden owned and operated the corner drug store, and lived upstairs. He was the kingpin of the Volunteer Fire Department throughout his life in St. Matthews, and donated use of the land upon which the fire station was built.

Fire association meetings were always held in his drug store. His upstairs bedroom was equipped with the alarm signal, and he took time off from his self-appointed duty as alarm custodian only twice a year, Labor Day and Christmas Day. On Labor Day he always operated a successful wheel at the annual American Legion carnival.

Ogden was assisted by his son John Henry Ogden, who placed phone calls to the volunteers each time the alarm sounded.

Throughout the period from 1919 until March, 1931, fire insurance in the St. Matthews area cost 96¢ per \$100 of property valuation.

Upon receipt of a new Seagrave pumper in March 1931, the fire insurance rate dropped to 84¢ per \$100.

**Pumper at Lyndon:** Still owned by the association, the 1931 Seagrave pumper has been used by the Lyndon Volunteer Fire department since August 1951. It will come back home to the new headquarters building (117 St. Matthews Avenue), upon arrival of a new pumper purchased by the Lyndon department which is expected this weekend.

Purchase of a second Seagraves pumper was authorized by the association directors in February 1941. At the same time, construction of a new and larger fire station, right next door was authorized. The building was completed in May, just in time to receive the new pumper.

That building was razed this month, by agreement with Ralph Whitehead, owner of the property, immediately after the new fire station was occupied on St. Matthews Avenue.

Although property in Jefferson county receives fire protection now only from volunteer departments, except in Anchorage, there was a time, not too long ago, when service was also supplied by paid departments. In 1946, three tax paid fire departments were set up, and each equipped with a pumper. They were located at Middletown, Newburg, and Pleasure Ridge, one unit for each magisterial district.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1952)

John M. Monohan, Jr., chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department, recalls that the Middletown pumper was on display at the first St. Matthews Potato Festival in the summer of 1947.

The county department was abolished in January, 1950, and the St. Matthews volunteer association purchased the pumper that had been stationed at Middletown. The pumper moved to St. Matthews in November, 1951.

**Serve Area Doubled:** The year 1951 was a memorable one for the department in another way, too. The Kentucky Inspection Bureau granted the St. Matthews department an extension of territory from 1 ½ to three miles, the only volunteer association in the county authorized to serve such a large area.

That recognition was given, due to the department's low fire loss record, equipment, efficiency, and because of the formation of other volunteer departments in the general area.

At the same time, seventh class insurance rates were reduced another 9¢ from 33¢ to 24¢, as at present. Seventh class rates apply within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant and within three miles of the St. Matthews Volunteer fire department.

In September, 1951, the lot for the new, and still larger, fire station was purchased by the association from the Elwanger estate. Construction started in June, 1952, with Roy Cochran as general contractor. The building was occupied October 1.

The building was officially inspected on October 10 by Fiscal Court Judge Boman L. Shamburger.

**Phone On Trucks:** Another "first" acquired by the St. Matthews fire department came with installation of mobile telephone equipment on one of the trucks. All volunteer fire departments in Jefferson County are now so equipped, enabling the chiefs to call other departments, county police, or even to call the Mrs. to tell her "I'll be late for supper, hon; I'm out on a run."

Again, knock on wood, but the St. Matthews department has fought only three Big fires.

Holy Trinity church burned down to the foundation in September, 1937. The rear part of the Ford Agency building was destroyed by fire in 1943; since rebuilt, it is now occupied by the St. Matthews Trim Shop and Consolidated Sales. The third fire was in 1945 when the A & P burned out where Buck's and other stores are now.

Since the death of Jesse Ogden in 1945, the department has been indebted to Mr. T. Hopkins of the Belmont Cab Co. for answering all fire calls gratis and summoning the volunteer members of the department by phone calls to their homes or business places.

By arrangement with the telephone company, the department can also be summoned in case of fire by dialing "O" and asking for the St. Matthews fire department.

Constant improvement of the department can be credited to the board of directors, the chief and his officers, and the willing cooperation of the 35 active members of the department.

John M. Monohan, who has been the department chief since 1941, is assisted by Richard Herdt, assistant chief; J. P. Terry and John Westerman, captains; Martin Kamer and George Westwood, lieutenants.

Former chiefs of the department were: Xavier Schuler, Andrew Neichter, Raymond Young, and Henry Monohan.

The present board of directors consists of John M. Monohan, Jr. president; E. L. Wilson vice-president; George Miller, secretary; Fred Boss, treasurer; J. P. Terry, Martin Kamer, Louis Schweitzer and Joe Zehnder.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1952)



Left to right: Randy Robertson, Ray Wilson, **John Monohan, Jr.**, J. P. Terry, R. M. Wheeler, J. B. Kaster, John Cauthorn, Ed Foley, **Jack Monohan**, Charlie Haun, Marty Kamer.



Ed Foley and John Monohan, Jr. on right. 1952.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1952)



### 1952 Softball Team:

From left to right front row: Joe Kempf, John Kaster, John M. Monohan, Jr., Dick Wheeler, Rich Herdt, and Denny Engnehl.

From left to right middle row: Rich Herdt Sr., J. P. Terry, Phil Resch, Paul Sauer, George Westwood, Paul Dawson, Wells P. Meyer, Melvin Schrode, Ed Foley and Mel Zehnder.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1953—1954)

**March 12, 1953: *The Voice of St. Matthews: Irishman Runs the Fire Department, And Does An Excellent Job.*** The chief of the best fire department in Jefferson County is a hard-looking Irishman named John M. Monohan, Jr. And the reason the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire department is the best in Jefferson County is because a hard-looking Irishman named John M. Monohan, Jr. is chief.

His men, all volunteers, swear by him. He's exercised such discipline over them that they are off to the scene of a fire within 2 minutes after an alarm is turned in. No one ever questions his orders. They have complete confidence in his abilities.

He has trained his assistants so thoroughly that at the moment, at least five are capable of handling the department in his absence. They are Richard Herdt, assistant chief, J. P. Terry and John Westerman, captains, and George "Red" Westwood and Martin Kamer, lieutenants.

One or more of these men is always available in case a fire breaks out while Monohan is at his job at Reynolds Metals where he is a process engineer.

Every year the entire volunteer crew gets 10 to 20 hours extra training by a man approved by the Kentucky Inspection Bureau. This training is supplemented by films. The department now handles about 60 fires a year. Monohan's biggest worry is that there are not enough fire hydrants in the St. Matthews area. To offset that disadvantage, his three trucks carry 500, 300, and 150 gallons of water respectively. The one thing he dreads most is a fire breaking out in a big, open church, where the flames cannot be confined.

He keeps himself posted on latest firefighting techniques by attending the University of Kentucky fire school every year. There's not a technique or instrument for fighting fires that he has not studied for possible use on the St. Matthews Fire Department.

Monohan was born on Brown's Lane and has lived in St. Matthews all his life. He is a graduate of Holy Trinity Grade School and St. Xavier High School. He studied engineering for two and one-half years at the University of Louisville. He started firefighting as a hobby and has been with the St. Matthews company since 1936. He was made chief in 1941.

He belongs to no clubs. All his time is devoted to his two jobs, though lately he spends Saturdays on a 355-acre farm in Shelby County, helping his brother look after 90 head of cattle. The Monohan's acquired the farm just before Christmas.

He is still a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church. He and his wife Katherine Marcilliat, of Somerset and St. Matthews, live at 3909 Elmwood. They have four children – Jack 15, Mary M. 13, Steve 11, and Douglas 9.



**1954, March 11, Newspaper Article: The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department went on the air this week.**

The department installed sending and receiving radio sets in the firehouse on St. Matthews Avenue, on its three fire trucks, and at Belmont Cab which receives calls for the St. Matthews Fire Department and gives out the alarm.

Eventually the department hopes to put sets in the homes and automobiles of each fireman, 29 in all.

The sets installed last week cost \$4,000. Full equipment for all firemen will cost an additional \$23,000.00."

"We now have the basic equipment," said fire chief John Monohan. "We can add one more piece at a time."

He said all costs would be paid by the department, without any outside assistance.

The radios would improve fire service, he said, because they will allow quick communication from truck to truck and from truck to fire station. In the past the firefighters had to rely on sirens.

The department started numbering the fire apparatus:

- S1 1947 Seagrave 750 GPM pumper
- S2 1931 Seagrave 500 GPM pumper (Betsy)
- S3 1941 Ford-Seagrave 500 GPM pumper
- S4 1954 Seagrave 750 GPM quad

**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1955)**



Stephen Monohan, Mary Mattingly Monohan, Jack Monohan,  
Doug Monohan,  
Christmas 1955



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1955—1958)



**August 27, 1955:** SAFE DRIVING DAY flag to fly on accident free days was presented to the department.



Bill Micou, J. P. Terry, Chief Monohan.  
“Popcorn” Fire At Vogue Theatre Alarms Citizens.  
June 14, 1956 Newspaper Article.

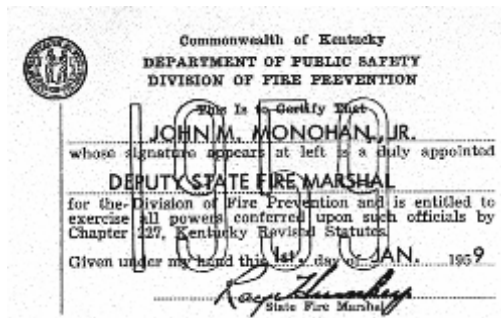


May 7, 1957, All Chiefs, no Indians in this picture as the Lions Club honored the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department.



Capt. Robert Burdon demonstrates three types of fire extinguishers at the opening of The fire College His listeners are Mayor James Noland left, County Judge Bert Van Arsdale, and St. Matthews Fire Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. 9/18/1958.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1959)



1959 Deputy State Fire Marshal card.

**April 1959: Fire Prevention series opens here:** Newest methods of fire prevention are being studied by the Jefferson County Volunteer Firefighters Association.

St. Matthews Fire Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. said that the chief of each Volunteer Fire Department is automatically a deputy State fire marshal. In addition, each department is allowed two more deputy marshals.

**November 12, 1959: The Volunteers—They do the work for free:** What avocation could a college student, a general contractor, a metal salesman, a buyer of animal fats, and a toy shop repairmen have in common?

In the once closely-knit but now large and rambling community of St. Matthews, the common interest of all these men is the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire department.

These 40 men are caretakers of equipment; they protect 6,437 homes, 195 places of business, six schools, 16 churches and two country clubs. Each year they save their customers a fortune in insurance premiums, which would be as much as four times the present rate, if there was no St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department.

By November 1, they had worked 5,164 hours in 1959. Training 291 hours, fighting fires 1,234 hours, and helping other departments, fighting fires 103 hours. The remaining 1,506 hours were spent on special activities for the benefit of the community such as "Bids for Kids," and other fund-raising drives, and for free inspections of possible fire hazards.

Their value to the community is immense. Yet their annual budget, including the cost of paying off their equipment, comes to only \$30,000. The answer is simple. The men all work without pay.

Because their time is given free to help the community, their rates are astonishingly low - \$3 for homes and south of Brownsboro Road, \$5 for homes north of Brownsboro; an average of \$17.50 for each place of business; \$10 for each school or church; and \$25 for each country club.

Five of the men have put in 20 years or more. Captain Richard Herdt has the longest record. Though only 42, his service runs to 24 years.

Next comes assistant chief Marty Kamer and Henry Monohan with 23 years apiece. Chief John Monohan, Jr., has put in 22 years, and J. P. Terry 20 years.

But the department is not a closed corporation. New men are welcome. And age does not seem to matter. The youngest, Jack Monohan, 22, has been a member of the department since the age of 14. (6/3/1951) The oldest, William Wriwers, 74, joined up when he was 69.

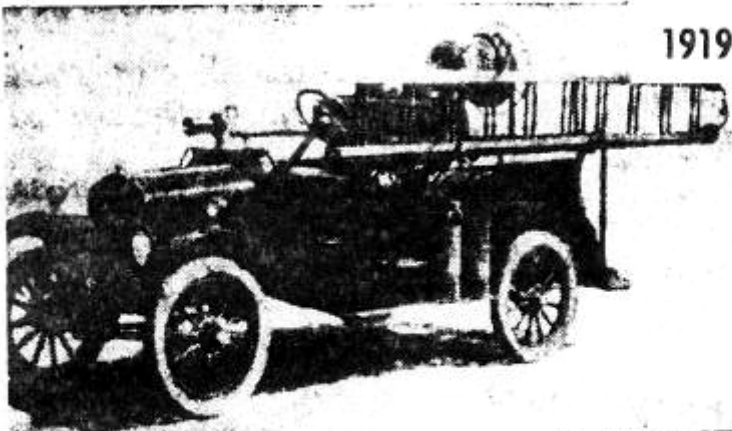
The dry year of 1959 has been hard on them, as it has for all fire departments. By November 1, they had made 144 runs, against only 110 for the entire year of 1958. They are called upon to fight everything from a weed fire to a blazing multi-story building.

Board of Directors of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire department: John Monohan, Jr., President; Martin Kamer, Vice-President; Fred C. Boss, Treasurer; George E. Miller, Secretary; W. Leland Wilson; Henry Monohan; J. P. Terry and Joseph Zehnder.

# GUARDING THE ST. MATTHEWS COMMUNITY

for

# 40 YEARS!



1919



## ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

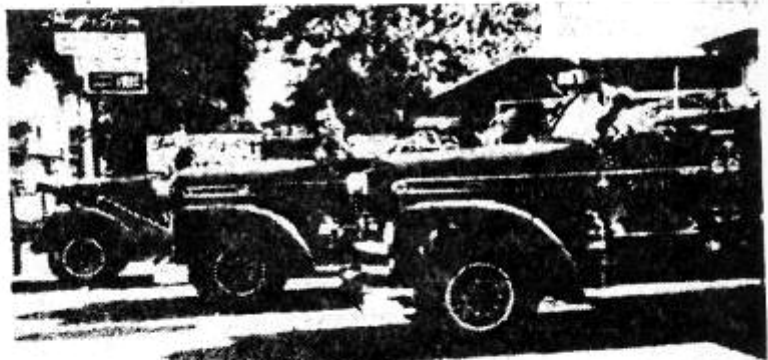
### OFFICERS

JOHN M. MONOHAN, JR., President  
MARTY KAMER, Vice President  
FRED C. BOSS, Treasurer  
GEORGE E. MILLER, Secretary  
CAPT. V. A. BEAM, Assistant Secretary

### DIRECTORS

JOHN M. MONOHAN, JR.  
W. LELAND WILSON  
FRED C. BOSS  
HENRY A. MONOHAN  
GEORGE E. MILLER  
J. P. TERRY  
JOE ZEHNDER  
MARTY KAMER

and 53 Volunteer Firemen



1959

# ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPT.

VOLUNTEER

117 ST. MATTHEWS AVE.

TW. 6-4411

Congratulations to "The Voice" on its 10th Anniversary



**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1961)**



Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. (1961)



First made of brass, then Aluminum, bumper plaques made by John M. Monohan Jr. and given to fire-fighters in the 1950s and 1960s. They were about 10" x 3 1/2"

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1961—1967)

**June 19, 1961: *Voice of St. Matthews*: Living Quarters Under Construction For St. Matthews Fire Department.** St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department is expanding its building on St. Matthews Avenue, as a step toward bringing the department up to sixth class specifications. The department presently is in seventh class.

A four room addition to the top of the building and a 20 by 50 foot addition the rear on the first floor are under construction. The four rooms on the second floor will be divided into two bedrooms a kitchen, living and bath for personnel who will be on duty at the station 24 hours a day. The 20 by 50-foot addition on the first floor will be used for equipment. The entire addition is estimated to cost between \$20,000 and \$25,000. It is being constructed with concrete block.



1961



July 15, 1965 fire at Ballerina.

Look close and you can see the Chief's car parked in front by Louisville's Quad 6.

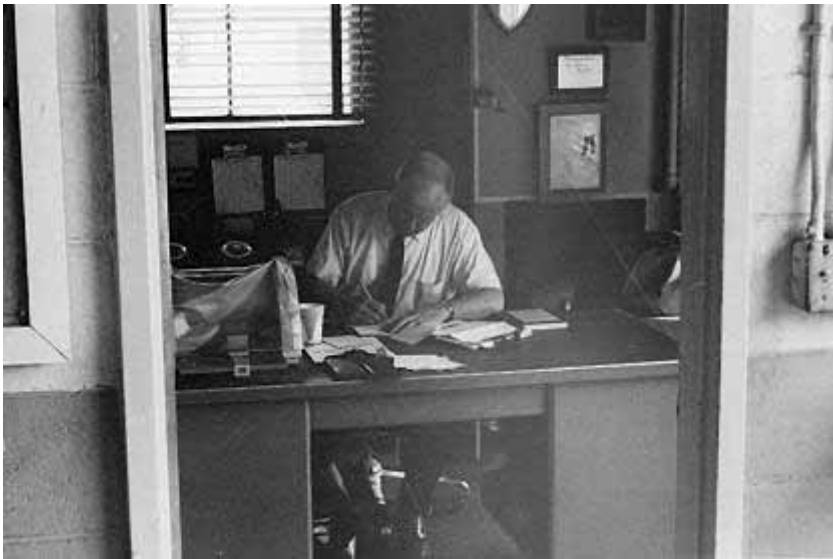


1967 Crusade For Children, Chief Monohan wearing "feather" from Louisville night club the "Boys" collected in "West St. Matthews which was downtown Louisville. They were on the way to report the collection amount.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1967/1968)



1967 reunion. This was not a “real” reunion just a gathering of “Old-Timers.” We think was 1967, and unfortunately no one in this picture is alive today. Left to right: Jack Kemp, Henry R. Kennedy, Raymond Young, unknown left of red light, W. R. Herdt driving, Charles C. Hahn, John F. Westerman, J. P. Terry, John M. Monohan, Jr., Bernie F. Handel.



Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. in small office at Fire Station at 117 St. Matthews Avenue. Pictures from Malcolm McMakin private collection.



March 1968, “Papa John”, and Kiernan Monohan’s first birthday. Doug & Margo Monohan’s son.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1969)



1968 — It was a Firefighter appreciation day. Below

Left to right: First two unknown, John M. Monohan, Jr., third man unknown, Skip Golden, Doug Monohan, Paul Dillman, Phil Iwan Al Ring.

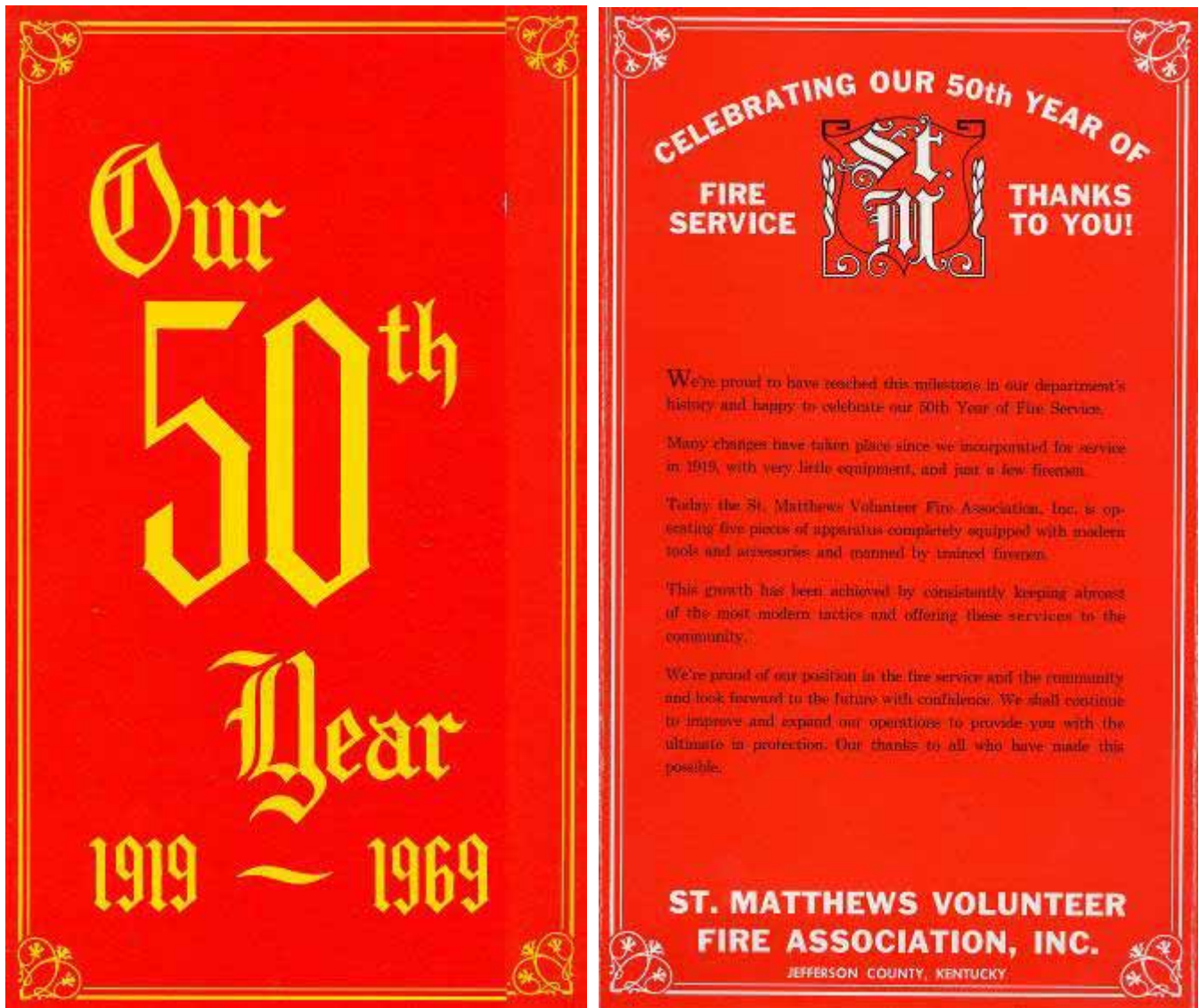


Marshall Planing Mill fire March 5, 1969. Chief Monohan having “discussion” with Lieutenant Al Ring.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1969)

Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. was very proud of the brochure of the department on the 50th Anniversary.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1969)

Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. was very proud of the brochure of the department on the 50th Anniversary.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1970)



Cutting the ribbon on their new home, April 1970.  
New Station at 4114 Lyndon Way, St. Matthews, KY.



Firefighter Pat Maloney giving “fire picture” to  
Chief John M. Monohan, Jr.



**April 12, 1970: FIREMEN IN NEW “HOME”--Hundreds get a look at headquarters, equipment,** by Marilyn Frederick: A 50th anniversary and the dedication of their new headquarters gave the firefighters of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department plenty to celebrate last Sunday at the formal opening of their new \$250,000 station.

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies were conducted by the former chief of the Louisville Fire Department, John Krusenklau.

A portrait of a firefighter then was presented to St. Matthews Chief John Monohan, Jr. by Pat Maloney.

Representing Gov. Louie B. Nunn, Rep. Scott Miller gave each of the officers of the St. Matthews department a Kentucky Colonel certificate.

**Dream has come true:** In a speech, Monohan spoke of the past and the present of the St. Matthews Volunteer firefighters, who first incorporated for service back in 1919.

“With the dedication of our new headquarters, a long-standing dream has come true,” said Doug Monohan, who was in charge of the dedication ceremonies. He was assisted by Melchior Zehnder.

The presentation of a new American Flag for the headquarters was conducted by the Churchill Downs Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Among the honored guests attending, in addition to Krusenklau, were John Smith of the Kentucky Inspection Bureau; County Attorney Bruce Miller, representing County Judge Todd Hollenbach; Eugene Dodson, retired fire chief of Louisville; Col. George Burton, Louisville’s safety director, and S. W. Palmer-Ball, head of the Alcoholic Beverages Commission.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1970)

**Equipment use explained:** According to Doug Monohan, about 500 people attended the dedication ceremonies and open house. “Cactus” Tom Brooks of WHAS was master of ceremonies.

Throughout the open house, firefighters were stationed in every room of the building to give visitors explanations of the use of the equipment.

The firefighters are trained to use this equipment properly every Tuesday night at the association’s weekly meeting.

“We sometimes meet more often,” Doug Monohan said, “In order to keep our training program beefed up.” Frequent visits from firefighters from other areas who are experts in particular areas of fire-fighting are included in their program, he added.

“We not only learn the correct use of the Scott Air Pack, for instance, but we also learn the engineering make-up of that breathing apparatus,” Doug Monohan explained.

First-aid also is an important part of any volunteer firefighter’s training, Doug Monohan said. “External heart massage and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation are included in our initial program,” he said.

Learning to drive a fire truck takes a well - qualified engineer, according to Doug Monohan. Besides adjusting to the complicated gear shifting of the trucks, the driver must also understand the mechanics of hydraulics and water pressures.

The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association is a private non-profit organization which holds contracts with 17 (fifth and sixth—class) cities and St. Matthews to provide protection for their areas. The budget totals about \$65,000 a year. All members serve without pay. The minimum age of the members is 21.

“We operate like any other corporation,” Doug Monohan said, “with a board of directors and officers.” Current board members are John M. Monohan, Jr.; W. Leland Wilson, George E. Miller, Fred Boss, Henry Monohan, Lawrence Grauman, John Emrich, J. P. Terry, and H. K. Babcock. Officers of the department include Major. W. R. Herdt, Captains R. C. Walling, Harry Babcock, A. E. Andriot and Jack DeHart, and Lieutenants. J. L. Jackson, Doug Monohan, Al Ring, and Denny Lange, Firefighters are Bill Andriot, Harry Babcock, Jerry Beckman, Herb Chreste, Don Daniels, Jack DeHart, Bill Dieckman, Paul Dillman, Denny Engnehl, Clarke Fenimore, Walt. Frank, Skip Golden, Jim Graven, Henry Kuhn, Pat Maloney, Tommy Martin, William Mercke, Tommy Miller, and Bud Morgan. Others are Clinton McAfee, C. F. McBride, Malcolm McMakin, Jim McGrath, John Noon, Russell Rakestraw, Ken Reising, Phil Schneider, Harvey Schultze, Allen Scott, O. P. Schreck, George Soules, Dan Sullivan, Richard Tackett, Charles Davis, David Wooton, Mel Zehnder, Kyle Reagan, Ed Foley, and Bob McGrath.



**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1972)**

**Chief Monohan Wants You!! (Recruiting Poster)**



**Chief Monohan wants YOU! !**

The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department needs 30 additional men to round out one of the best volunteer fire departments in Jefferson County. This could well be your opportunity of a lifetime...to be of real service to your community without investing a lot of time. Help keep St. Matthews a safe, pleasant place to live.

**Be a FIREFIGHTER...Volunteer TODAY**

For information call Lt. AL RING at 896-9120 or 896-4271

## **John M. Monohan, Jr. (December 11, 1972)**

**Tragically, Stephen O. Monohan, John & Katherine's son died**



John Monohan, Jr., Sean Francis Monohan, Steven Monohan & Sadie Monohan—1969.



1967 wedding photo & family photo with Sean

### **Time Line:**

1941, December 29, born in Louisville, KY to John & Katherine Monohan.

Attended Holy Trinity Grade School.

1960, graduated Trinity High School.

Attended Syracuse University and Bellarmine College.

Steven's nickname was "Butch."

1967, October 21, married Marilyn Ann Middlestadt at Ascension catholic Church.

1969, March 31, son Sean Francis Monohan was born to Steven and Marilyn Monohan.

Employed by Boone Gardiner Nursery.

1972, December 11, burned to death after he apparently suffered an epileptic seizure while soldering wreaths. A propane torch is thought to have ignited his clothing. Steven is buried in Calvary Cemetery in Louisville, KY.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1972— 1974)



Jim Graven, Tim Golden, Chief John Monohan, Assistant Chief Al Haeberlin, Brown house fire training. July 1972.



“The White Hats” as they were called, Chief Officers: Assist. Chief’s Haeberlin, Monohan, Chief John Monohan, 1974.



General meeting, Chief Monohan, Capt. Al Ring, Denis Bryant, Sam Wolf, back of Assistant Chief Al Haeberlin, 1974.



1974, Chief’s Car

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1975—1976)



**April 10, 1975:** The department held its annual ball.

JOHN MONOHAN, Chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department, Saturday danced with his daughter-in-law Marilyn Monohan at the fire fighters' annual ball. Chief Monohan, Denny Engnehl, A. E. Andriot Jr., Ed Foley, Marty Kamer, J. P. Terry, Harvey Schultz, Phil Schneider and R. E. Kaster were honored with "Magic 70" plaques, denoting their combined age and years of fire fighting experience have totaled 70.



Chief John Monohan, Jr. & Rick Albers September 1976, at Waterball Contest.

**October 14, 1976: Board meeting,** present, George Miller, Bill Andriot, John Monohan, Marty Kamer, J. C. Nuckols and Tom Jerry Smith. Bought a \$8,000 Certificate of Deposit. **Mr. Monohan announced to the board that he would be retiring from the Fire Department in the near future.** Along with this announcement he requested that Jack Monohan be appointed as Deputy Chief, and that Frank Florence be appointed Assistant Chief. They would serve until the annual meeting in July 1977. (Jack Monohan declined to be considered for Deputy Chief of the department, and Al Haeberlin was placed in that position.)

**October 19, 1976: Chief Monohan announces to firefighters that he will be retiring in July 1977.**



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1976—1977)



November 12, 1976, Typical “meeting of the minds” between Chief and Officer!!!! Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. & Captain Russ Rakestraw.

**July 13, 1977: Board meeting,** present, John Monohan, J. C. Nuckols, Bill Andriot, George Miller and Marty Kamer. Bought a \$5,000 Certificate of Deposit. Increased Mrs. Sharps salary to \$425 per month. Terry and Nuckols were re-elected for new terms expiring in 1981. Al Haeberlin was voted in to fill the un-expired term of Mr. Hammer. Bill Andriot was elected for 1 year representing the firefighters. The following are the terms of the directors:

John Monohan and Tom Jerry Smith terms expire 1978.

Phil Grauman and Marty Kamer terms expire 1979.

George Miller and Al Haeberlin terms expire 1980.

J. P. Terry and J. c. Nuckols terms expire 1981.

George Miller Chairman, Al Haeberlin President, A. E. Andriot Vice President, Marty Kamer Secretary, J. C. Nuckols Treasurer and J. P. Terry Process Agent.

Al Haeberlin Chief, Jack Monohan and Frank Florence Assistant Chiefs.

John Monohan made an Honoree member of the Board. Monohan thanked the Board and firefighters for what they did for him upon his retirement as Chief.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977)



**July 14, 1977: Unknown Newspaper Article:** The entire St. Matthews community and every firefighter for miles around are being invited to a reception honoring St. Matthews Fire Chief John M. Monohan, Jr. who is retiring after 40 years with the department.

The event will be held from 1 – 4 p.m. Sunday, July 17, at the firehouse on Lyndon Way in St. Matthews.

Monohan, a member of the department since 1937, has been chief since 1941. When he first joined the department, the fire station was located on Breckinridge Lane, south of Shelbyville Road. In 1942 the next fire station was built on Breckinridge Lane just north of the original station. In 1952 the department moved to 117 St. Matthews Avenue. In 1969 the department was again relocated to its present site at 240 Sears avenue.

St. Matthews City Council passed a resolution this week honoring Chief Monohan, and designating July 17-23 as a special week in his honor.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977)

**July 17, 1977: Chief Monohan hangs up helmet**, by Roger Harris, *Voice*: After 40 years of service with the St. Matthews Fire Department, John M. Monohan is hanging up his helmet.

For 36 of those 40 years he served as chief, but at the end of the month it's all over. No more racing to fires at unpredictable hours.

About 500 friends, relatives and well wishers filled the fire station on Lyndon Way Sunday to honor the veteran firefighter. Several government officials also were on hand to praise Monohan's work.

Monohan was appointed Chief in September 1941. In addition he served on the Fire Association Board of Directors — he retires as its president.

A parade of firefighters presented Monohan with mementoes — some serious and some lighthearted — of his 40 years of service.

One brave firefighter cautiously presented Monohan with a wire comb. Smiling broadly, running his hand over his thinning gray hair, Monohan accepted the gift in stride. Assistant Chief Frank Florence gave Monohan a pair of burned gloves. Another firefighter presented the chief with a "forehead press to smooth out those wrinkles."

Later after the ceremony was over Monohan said he was known around the firehouse as "Nine Wrinkles."

"I guess it's 'cause I frown all the time. It's a bad habit. But I don't know if I'll use it or not," he laughed.

The chief said he liked the ceremony fine and appreciated the attention, but he added with a smile, "I'm kind of surprised I didn't get more gag gifts."

Sitting next to his wife, Katherine, as the men and officers of the department expressed their appreciation of his work, Monohan appeared moved. In his eyes there was the faraway look of a man leaving behind happy memories.

But Monohan said he has no regrets about retiring. "I'll still be working full-time," he said.

County Judge Todd Hollenbach opened the ceremony citing the improvements in the department made while Monohan was chief. Also on hand to honor the Chief were Republican County Judge candidate Mitch McConnell and Democratic County Commissioner candidate Sylvia Watson.

When Monohan took over as chief the department was a small semi-rural operation headquartered at 109 Breckinridge Lane. In 1952 the department shifted to a St. Matthews Avenue site. In April 1970 the current, modern fire station was dedicated.

The \$250,000 building at Lyndon Way and Sears Avenue and three new pumpers were the major additions during his tenure.

Monohan also was a leader in the acquisition of self-contained breathing apparatus and two-way radio equipment.

Monohan, 65, is well-known in the St. Matthews area, having lived here all his life. He was born on the family farm, Wildwood, on Browns Lane. He now lives at 3909 Elmwood Ave. with his wife. They have one daughter and three sons. One son, John M. Monohan III, is currently serving as an assistant chief in the St. Matthews Fire Department.

The Monohan's also have 11 grandchildren, one of who is a firefighter with St. Matthews.

**Monohan said he was most proud of the "whole advancement" of the department during his 40 years. "Just the steady improvement we made over the years is what stands out in my mind. I think we have one of the best departments in the state."**

Also at the ceremony were representatives of neighboring fire departments Chiefs Bob Martin, of Middletown and Robert Gaddie, of Jeffersontown presented Monohan a mounted collection of badges and patches he had worn during his years of service.

Gaddie noted that he didn't think Monohan was ready to retire. "He learned I had a brigade over in the Bluegrass Industries Park and he came over and put in an application."

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977)

Monohan will be succeeded as chief by Albert R. Haeberlin. Haeberlin, 41, has been with the St. Matthews Fire Department since 1954. He has served as an assistant chief since 1970. He is a manager at General Electric's Appliance Park and lives at 4066 Elmwood with his wife Jenny and their two children.

Haeberlin, who was running around the fire station trying to keep the ceremonies moving, said Monohan would be a tough act to follow. "He's put in a lot of years and is responsible for all the improvements that have been made. I just hope he keeps coming around."

He probably will. Just to make sure the firefighters presented Monohan with a gold key to the firehouse and a current roster.



John M. Monohan, Jr., chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association, is going to hang up his hat.

July 16, 1977: *The Louisville Times*: Going out of blazes, St. Matthews Fire Chief retiring after 41 years, by Delma J. Only 55 firemen: But Monohan bemoans the fact that the department has only 55 firemen. "With 35,000 people in the area, only 55 of 'em are interested enough to belong to the department. We certainly could use more," he said.

Back in "the good old days," Monohan reminisced, "when we only had 12 or 15 firemen, a lot of people who didn't actually belong to the department would help us with fires. That's one way things have changed."

"But that kind of assistance no longer would be acceptable, since firemen now must have quite a bit of training," Monohan said. That, he said, is how the St. Matthews department fights the age-old stereotype of the inept volunteer fire department.

"In our opinion, it doesn't matter whether you're paid or not, it's your training that counts. We have our own training here once a week, and on another night, we have instructors from the Louisville department, other departments in the state and specialists in flammables.

Back when he joined the department, Monohan said, such training was not available. New firemen learned through trial and error.

"Now the department pays the tuition and books for any man who wants to go to Jefferson Community College and study fire science and maintains passing grades," he said.

Three men in the department have earned associate of arts degrees in fire science, and five are now enrolled in the course, he said.

Monohan says he joined the department because "I guess I was just interested in the neighborhood and my neighbors. St. Matthews was a very friendly community then. You knew everybody. Now, you don't know anybody."

For the first time in quite a while, Monohan will have an additional 30 to 35 hours free each week.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977)

But “I don’t think I’ll have any trouble keeping busy,” he said. He doesn’t have a lot of hobbies; “I’ll have to develop them, I guess,” he added.

Monohan and his wife Katherine have two sons, a daughter and 11 grandchildren. He is employed by Raque Food Systems.

The St. Matthews City Council has designated next week as John M. Monohan Jr. and St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association Week, beginning with an open house tomorrow from 1 to 4 p.m. at the firehouse.

Chief Al Haeberlin, 41, a member of the department since 1954 and an employee of General Electric Co., replaces Chief Monohan. Al and his wife Jenny and their two children live at 4066 Elmwood Ave.




Front Row (left to right): Mel Zehnder, A. E. (Bill) Andriot Jr., Marty Kamer, Alan Ray Scott, Jack DeHart, Joe Wheatley, Brian Martin, Chris Kinberger, Chief John M. Monohan Jr., John Noon, Gary Doyle, Mike Noon, John Walling, Tim Golden, Mike Noland

Standing (left to right): J. P. Terry, Mike Engnehl, A. E. (Bill) Andriot III, Ken Strange, Hugo Koehler, Harvey Schultze, Pat Noland, Bill Dieckman, Richard Tackett, Ran Florence Jr., Dave Kamer, Denny Engnehl, Tom Kaelin, Russell Rakestraw, Pat (Jessie) Owens, Rick Albers, Phil (Leaky) Schneider, Al Haeberlin, Kent Monohan, Mike Davis, Jim Hytken, Jack Monohan, Bob Wheatley, Chuck Kuhn, Frank Florence

**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977)**

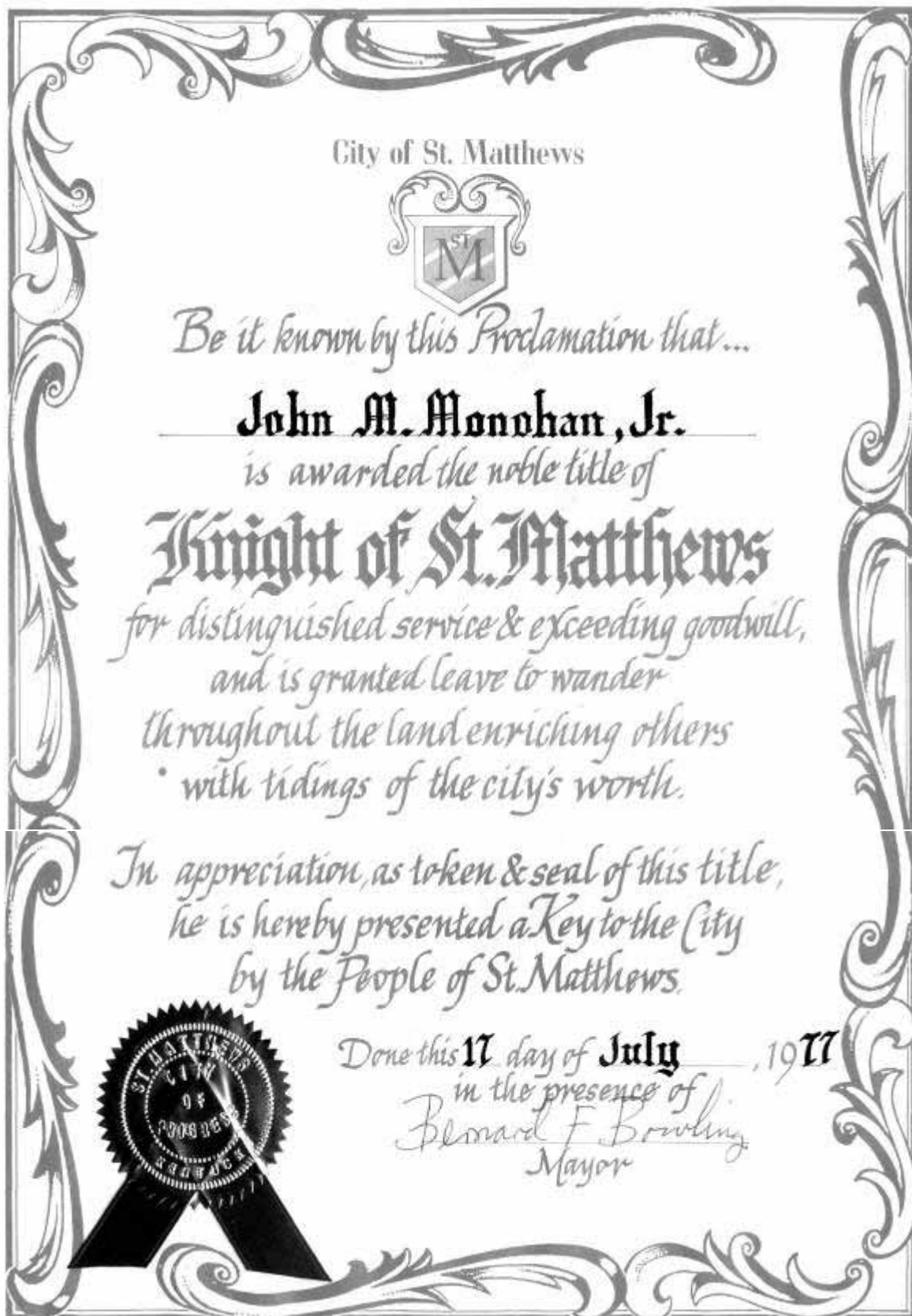
**Full Page in the Voice, Thursday July 14, 1977**

ST. MATTHEWS THANKS YOU  
**JOHN M. MONOHAN, JR.**  
FOR 40 YEARS OF SERVICE



The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department  
cordially invites you to attend an Open House  
in honor of  
**CHIEF JOHN M. MONOHAN, JR.**  
Sunday, the seventeenth of July 1:00 to 4:00  
nineteen hundred and seventy-seven  
at the St. Matthews Fire House  
He is retiring after 40 years of service to the St. Matthews Community

**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977)**





**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1977/1981)**

**John's retirement party**



1977 Retirement Party—Jack, Mary Matt, and Doug standing  
Katherine and John



August 1981, John & Katherine



**John M. Monohan, Jr.**

**One of the many Monohan reunions**



**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1984)**

**1984 Thanksgiving**



Doug, MaryMatt, John, Katherine, Jack

**Christmas 1984**



John, Christmas 1984



**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1985/1986)**

**Easter 1985**



Easter, 1985, Katherine and John

**50th Wedding Anniversary, May 26, 1986**



Jack, Mary Matt, John, Katherine, Doug

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1986)

### 50th Wedding Anniversary, May 26, 1986



John & Katherine Monohan



Marilyn, Jack, Papa John, Bill, Nana, Mary Matt, Margo, Doug, Marilyn

1936      MAY 27      1986

**FIFTIETH WEDDING  
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
OF  
JOHN AND KATHERINE MONOHAN**

CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Processional - JOYFUL, JOYFUL WE ADORE THEE

Opening Theme - Jack Monohan

First Reading: Genesis, Chapter 2, Verses 18-24 -  
Bill Laidlaw

Response: Psalm 128: 1-2, 3, 4-5 - Doug Monohan

Second Reading: Rom. 5, 1-5 - Doug Monohan

Alleluia Verse

Gospel: Matthew, 22: 35-40 - Father Gerst

Homily: Father Gerst

Renewal of Marriage Vows - Father Gerst

Petitions: Jack Monohan

Offertory

Gift Bearers - Mary M. Laidlaw, Marilyn Monohan  
Kent Monohan, Graham Monohan

Acclamation

Eucharistic Ministers - Marilyn Monohan  
Margo Monohan

Nuptial Blessing - Father Gerst

Recessional - HOLY GOD WE PRAISE THY NAME

We would like to thank everyone who helped make this wonderful day special.

Celebrant - Reverend Monsignor Anthony Gerst

Organist - Mrs. Rose Sheehy

Soloist - Doctor Christopher Linstrom

Ushers - Stuart Monohan, Stephen Laidlaw  
Kiernan Monohan, Sean Monohan

Guest Book - Martha Laidlaw

Reception Servers - Sara Laidlaw, Dana Monohan  
Kelly Monohan, Jenny Monohan  
Mary Kay Scott

Helping in their own ways - Amber Laidlaw and Robbie Monohan

In our minds - Stephen Monohan and Gregory Laidlaw

\*\*\*\*\*

LOVE IS ALL AROUND US TOUCHING LIFE IN SOFT  
BEAUTIFUL WAYS BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER AS ONE.  
IF YOU LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE  
YOU'LL LIVE.

LOVE GIVEN AWAY IS NEVER GONE.

LOVE MAKES LASTING MEMORIES

AND MEMORIES MAKE LOVE LAST.

LOVE IS MANY THINGS TO MANY PEOPLE

BUT ABOVE ALL LOVE IS.

\*\*\*\*\*



## **John M. Monohan, Jr. (1986)**

**Friday, July 18th, 1986**

**My Dear Ones,**

**There are really no words to adequately describe how we feel about all you have done for us. I wish there were, for our hearts are so full of love, of gratitude, of application I could go on - - -**

**It was very moving and poignant occasion. I had no idea it would be as wonderful as it was. You all didn't miss a single trick! And I still get misty-eyed whenever I think of the tremendous outpouring of love accorded us. How fortunate we are! Not only to still have each other, but to have such a loving and caring family and so many wonderful friends. The tributes we have received boggle the mind.**

**You should know also that I felt Steve's presence so acutely that day. I know he was with us.**

**You Doug, asked if I had settled down. No, actually I have not, and I hope I never do.**

**Please just know that we do thank each of you from the bottom of our hearts, and that we love you so very much.**

**Mother and Dad**



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (February 10, 1991)

Mrs. John M. Monohan, Jr., 77, died Sunday at St. Matthews Manor.

She was the former Katherine Marcilliat.

Survivors besides her husband: two sons, Douglas L. Monohan of Atlanta and John Monohan III; a daughter, Mary M. Laidlaw of Hilton Head, South Carolina; two sisters, Mary M. Linstrom of Greenbelt, Maryland, and Joan M. Manemann of Tucson, Arizona; 10 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Funeral: 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 501 Cherrywood Road. Burial; Calvary Cemetery, Visitation: Ratterman's, 3711 Lexington Road, 2-9 p.m. Tuesday.

Expressions of sympathy; donor's favorite charity.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)

**July 12, 1999: *The Voice – Tribune*, Wednesday, July 28, 1999. John M. Monohan Jr., former St. Matthews fire chief, dies at 87:** John M. Monohan Jr., 87, died Monday, July 12, 1999, at Pine Tree Villa Nursing Home.

Mr. Monohan joined the St. Matthews fire department in 1937, became chief in 1941 and retired as chief in 1977. During his years of service, he ran the department with a tough military-style approach, but was always fair. Many innovative and new methods made the St. Matthews Fire Department a model for others. In an interview when he retired, he said, “Steady growth. That’s been the biggest accomplishment of this department. We’ve tried to grow faster than the community so we can provide adequate fire protection.” Firefighters of his day still respect the leadership he provided.

He was also a retired employee of both Reynolds Metals and Raque Food Systems.

Born Nov. 26, 1911, he was a third-generation native of St. Matthews born on the family farm (present site of Mallard Crossing), the second oldest of four children of the late John and Sadie Monohan.

He was a lifelong member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church and attended grade school there before going to St. Xavier High School and University of Louisville Speed School.

He married his grade school sweetheart, Katherine Marcilliat, who preceded him in death. He was preceded in death by a son, Stephen O. Monohan, and one grandchild, Greg Laidlaw.

Survivors: two sons, John M. “Jack” Monohan III of St. Matthews and Douglas L. Monohan of Atlanta, Ga.; a daughter, Mary M. Laidlaw of Hilton Head Island, S.C.; a sister, Mary Ellen Houston; 10 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Holy Trinity Catholic Church with burial in Calvary Cemetery. Ratterman’s-Lexington Road Funeral Home handled the arrangements.

Memorial gifts: WHAS Crusade for Children or Holy Trinity Catholic Church building fund.





**John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)**

**Douglas Monohan read this at John's funeral Mass.**

## ABOUT THE IRISH

WHAT SHALL I SAY ABOUT THE IRISH?  
THE UTTERLY IMPRACTICAL, NEVER PREDICTABLE,  
SOMETIMES IRASCIBLE, QUITE INEXPLICABLE IRISH.  
A STRANGE BLEND OF SHYNESS, PRIDE AND CONCEIT,  
AND STUBBORN REFUSAL TO BOW IN DEFEAT.  
HE'S SPOILING AND READY TO ARGUE OR FIGHT,  
YET THE SMILE OF A CHILD FILLS HIS SOUL WITH DELIGHT.  
HIS EYES ARE THE QUICKEST TO WELL UP IN TEARS,  
YET HIS STRENGTH IS THE STRONGEST TO BANISH YOUR FEARS.  
HIS FAITH IS AS FIERCE AS HIS DEVOTION IS GRAND,  
AND THERE'S NO MIDDLE GROUND ON WHICH HE WILL STAND.  
HE'S WILD AND HE'S GENTLE,  
HE'S GOOD AND HE'S BAD,  
HE'S PROUD AND HE'S HUMBLE,  
HE'S HAPPY AND SAD.  
HE'S IN LOVE WITH THE OCEAN, THE EARTH AND THE SKIES,  
HE'S ENAMORED WITH BEAUTY WHEREVER IT LIES.  
HE'S VICTOR AND VICTIM,  
A STAR AND A CLOD,  
BUT MOSTLY HE'S IRISH,  
IN LOVE WITH HIS GOD.

CAUTHOR UNKNOWN

In Loving Memory of  
John M. Monohan, Jr.  
November 26, 1911 to July 12, 1999





## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)

**November 3, 1999: *The Voice-Tribune*, by Mark Shallcross, St. Matthews Fire Department, open house is Nov. 4:** The St. Matthews Fire Protection District will hold an open house to celebrate 80 years of continuous service from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 7, at Station No. 1, 240 Sears Avenue.

**The event also will include a ceremony to dedicate the station to the memory of former Chief John M. Monohan, Jr., who died last July. Monohan was a member of the department from 1937 until his retirement in 1977, serving as fire chief for 36 years.**

Monohan's son, John Monohan III, said his father played an important role in making St. Matthews a model department in the area.

"He was instrumental in helping some of the other neighboring departments get started. He had a great working relationship with the other chiefs," said John M. Monohan, III, who retired in 1993 as assistant chief.

"As chief, he almost dedicated his life to the development of the department. He ran the department with an iron fist, but he was really a pussycat. He was crusty on the outside, but he was real proud of the young guys who moved up under his watch."

John Monohan III said his father "shunned the spotlight," but wouldn't object to the plaque and photograph being dedicated at the station this weekend.

Monohan's son, Stuart, is a major in the St. Matthews District. Another son, Kent, recently left St. Matthews to serve with the Harrods Creek Fire Department.

"My father and his brother (Henry) served on the department at the same time; my brother (Doug) and I served together; and Stuart and Kent were both on the department at the same time," said John Monohan III.

The celebration will feature a display of the district's fire apparatus, including "Betsy," the 1931 pumper that was fully restored last year. Fire Chief William Seng will present several special awards to past and current firefighters, including three who retired this year.



**A Few Memories**



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)

**November 5, 1999: *The Courier-Journal, Neighborhoods*, by Martha Elson, St. Matthews—Firefighting family’s service to be honored: The St. Matthews Fire Protection District’s history has been dominated by one name since the late 1930s — Monohan.**

The late John M. Monohan Jr. joined the department in 1937 and served as chief for a record 36 years, from 1941 to 1977. He was one of six Monohan’s to serve.

John Monohan, Jr., who died this summer at 87, will be honored Sunday when the fire district celebrates 80 years of service.

The district plans to rededicate its renovated station at 240 Sears Ave. and name it for Chief Monohan.

The event will include an open house and a display of fire equipment including “Betsy,” the department’s 1931 restored pumper. But above all, Sunday’s tribute is for all the Monohans and their more than 150 years of combined fire service.

The firefighting family tree starts with brothers John Jr. and Henry Monohan. Henry put in 30 years as a firefighter, including a brief stint as chief in 1941, before his brother took the reins. Henry then served on the board of directors until the late 1960s.

John Monohan Jr.’s sons, John M. “Jack” Monohan III and Doug Monohan, followed their father into firefighting. Jack Monohan, now 63, retired as assistant chief in 1993, after being with the department for 42 years.

Doug Monohan, who now lives outside Atlanta, was a captain for eight years before leaving in 1974.

The third generation has served St. Matthews, too — Jack’s sons Kent and Stuart Monohan.

Kent Monohan, 41, of Jeffersonville, Ind., was a firefighter with the district 15 years, before transferring recently to the Harrods Creek Volunteer Fire Department.

Stuart Monohan is still there, a major in his 17th year, carrying on his grandfather’s tradition. “I was born into it,” said Monohan, 35, of Cherrywood Village.

Sunday’s tribute to his grandfather was suggested by Russell Rakestraw II of Naperville, Ill., a former St. Matthews firefighter who worked with John Monohan Jr. for eight years. In a letter to fire district chairman Faye Ellerkamp, Rakestraw said Monohan guided the department’s growth with a steady hand.

Although his tenure saw both the department and the service area grow exponentially his leadership assured that the service kept pace with that growth.”

Jack Monohan, Sunday’s master of ceremonies, remembers his dad’s “no-nonsense” approach to running the department. He credits him with making St. Matthews a model department that was emulated by others.

His dad did not like a lot of fanfare, Monohan added, and “would probably be embarrassed” by Sunday’s tribute.

That’s just why Rakestraw thinks he should be honored — so people in the community will know about his contributions;

Jack Monohan said his dad started a family tradition that’s still going strong. “It’s all he (Stuart) ever wanted to do,” he said. “It’s all I ever wanted to do.”

Added Stuart Monohan, “It makes you pretty proud.”

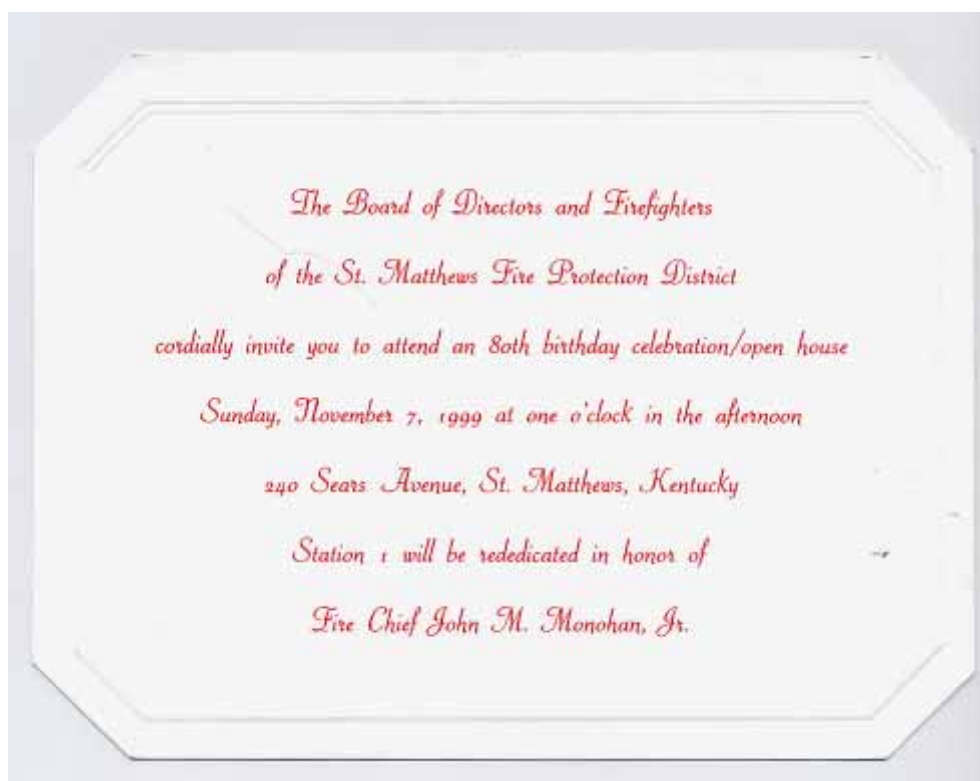


John M. Monohan Jr.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)



Monohan's have dominated the St. Matthews fire district including, from left, Stuart Monohan, John M. "Jack" Monohan III and Kent Monohan





## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)



Jack Monohan



Russ Rakestraw



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)



VOICE-TREBUKE STAFF PHOTO

Three generations of the Monohan family were honored by the St. Matthews Fire Protection District at a Nov. 7 open house at Station No. 1. A plaque was dedicated to John H. Monohan Jr., who died in July after serving as fire chief for 36 years. From left, John's sons and former St. Matthews firefighters Doug and John Monohan III, and grandsons Stuart and Kent Monohan, firefighters with the St. Matthews and Harrods Creek fire departments, respectively.



## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)

November 7, 1999:

### SPEECH FOR STMFD DEDICATION by Russ Rakestraw

#### Acknowledgements

Chairperson Ellerkamp, Chief Seng, Board Members, Firefighters and Guests

**Introduction:** I am deeply honored to have been invited to speak before you today. Working with, and for, Chief Monohan was a life-changing experience for me and to be asked to help celebrate his service is quite humbling.

**Body:** Chief Monohan left an indelible mark on this department, on St Matthews, and on the lives of those who chose to follow him. Many STMFD members went on to become successful elected officials entrepreneurs, business executives and fire chiefs. I believe that our success can be attributed, in part, to his leadership and to the values that he instilled in us.

Chief Monohan was a very complex individual and his lessons were neither taught nor learned easily. The values he so consistently demonstrated, however, became powerful beacons that guided our collective paths.

Although the values Chief Monohan modeled were many, I have chosen three which, in my opinion, both clearly define the man and demonstrate the impact of his leadership.

**Commitment:** The first of these values is commitment. Chief Monohan was committed to his community, his department and to providing excellence in fire protection. Chief Monohan's commitment to his community is most clearly demonstrated by his 36 years of service as Fire Chief. Being Fire Chief required that he spend from thirty to forty hours per week performing department-related activities as well as a willingness to be on call from sixteen to twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. All of this was done without monetary compensation. This record alone would make Chief Monohan a remarkable public servant.

Chief Monohan's commitment to STMFD is no less remarkable. During his tenure he managed financial affairs, specified and purchased trend-setting major fire apparatus, supervised the design and construction of two fire stations, managed a comprehensive apparatus and facilities maintenance program, and led emergency operations. In many similarly sized departments, these activities would be the responsibility of several full-time positions. As one who has had responsibility for these functions, I recognize the enormity of the task.

Chief Monohan was also committed to excellence. I believe that if Tom Peters had known Chief Monohan and STMFD, they would have been included in his book, In Search of Excellence. Chief Monohan accepted no less than excellent performance from either himself or his firefighters. This excellence was demonstrated in many ways from technical innovations, such as quints and quads, two-way radios and self-contained breathing apparatus, to comprehensive training. What is notable about Chief Monohan's penchant for excellence was his avoidance of the traditional trappings of fire department success such as bigger and flashier apparatus and huge stations. He knew, and imbued in all of us, that excellence in firefighting came from efficient, effective operations and not from window dressing. A further tribute to Chief Monohan's excellence in leadership can be seen in the fact that STMFD residents enjoyed one of the lowest tax levy rates in Jefferson County. Chief Monohan recognized that throwing money at a problem is no guarantee of an effective solution. Those of us who served with him have benefited greatly from his insistence on excellence.

Chief Monohan was also deeply committed to his firefighters. There are people here today who, in times of crisis such as a serious family illness, learned of the Chief's commitment. He would take the person aside and quietly and respectfully pledge his and the department's support. These were not empty words but rather were words backed by the full resources of both the Chief and the department.

**Pride:** The second value that I would like to highlight is Pride. Chief Monohan was a proud man who was proud of his department. Pride in this context is not the self-congratulatory, high-fiving, we're number one gloating that passes for pride today. Instead Chief Monohan's pride was a deep, intense and humble pride that permeated STMFD.

The columnist Bob Greene, writing recently in the *Chicago Tribune*, told the story of Ted Williams, the last professional baseball player to hit over .400 in a season. In Ted William's last at bat in his last game, he hit a home run. As he circled the bases he looked down rather than up to the crowd and, in spite of a long standing ovation, refused to come out and acknowledge the crowd. When I read this I immediately pictured Chief Monohan in my mind. Chief Monohan's satisfaction came not from public accolades but from a deep sense of accomplishment.

## John M. Monohan, Jr. (1999)

November 7, 1999:

### SPEECH FOR STMFD DEDICATION by Russ Rakestraw

All STMFD firefighters knew that ours was the best department. Our training and emergency response were second to none and woe onto any of us who were willing to accept less. Chief Monohan's infectious pride was a source of strength to many of us as we moved down our separate career paths. The humility of Chief Monohan's pride is well illustrated by his actions following the Greathouse School fire. When a citizen attacked the operation in the local press, Chief Monohan refused to "answer the ad" by engaging in public debate. His pride and wisdom in understanding the public's short attention span were remarkable. My sense too is that he understood, as Chief Alan Brunacini of Phoenix, AZ once said; "Never get into a battle with people who purchase ink by the barrel".

**Courage:** The third, and final, value that stands out is courage. Chief Monohan was, as are all firefighters, physically courageous. Chief Monohan was also courageous leader. He consistently demonstrated what I believe is the strongest courage of all; the courage to follow his own conscience. During my tenure as fire chief, it was demonstrated over and over that there are many agendas in the community other than effective fire protection and that the fire chief is constantly pulled and pushed in directions away from excellence in public protection. Everyone, from the mayor, to the city manager, to the city council, to the business owner and even the members of the fire department sometimes have agendas that run counter to effective emergency response. Chief Monohan was unmoved by these competing agendas. Today's world of "leadership via opinion polls" is the antithesis of Chief Monohan's leadership style. I suspect that those of us who have suffered, or seen our communities suffer, because of today's leadership, long for leaders with the courage of Chief Monohan.

In conclusion, let me say that I am both honored and humbled by the opportunity to stand before you today. Chief Monohan's impact on the lives of not only the citizens of St. Matthews but also the citizens of Eastern Jefferson County and the citizens of the jurisdictions that Chief Monohan's protégés went on to serve, is immeasurable. It is altogether fitting that the department rededicate this building to his memory. To those of you who served or serve as St Matthews firefighters I commend you for your commitment to excellence and your record of first-class fire and life protection.

Thank you and God bless.



**John M. Monohan, Jr.**



## **John M. Monohan, Jr.**

### **Highlights of Chief John M. Monohan, Jr's. Career**

Established the department on a sound financial footing and maintained it.

Created a board of sound business men to help guide the department.

Constructed three fire houses and expanded one of them.

Added 8 pieces of apparatus to the department.

One of the first departments in the state to use two-way radios.

First department in the state to use self contained breathing apparatus.

Kept the department growing faster than the community.

Made training of the firefighters a mainstay of the department.

