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First Kent FD Chief Passes Away

Kent, Wash. – May 20, 2016– It is with great sadness that the Kent Regional Fire Authority announces the passing of former Fire Chief Tom Foster. Chief Foster died peacefully at a local assisted care facility on May 9th.

Chief Foster was the first paid Fire Chief for the then, Kent Fire Department. He served in that capacity from 1965 until he retired in 1981. Prior to that, the position was a volunteer one.

Firefighting was in Chief Foster's blood. He began his long career as a volunteer firefighter in 1950 in the Panther Lake area. In 1952, he was hired as a firefighter by the Seattle Fire Department where he served until resigning in 1965 to become the chief of the Kent FD.

In addition to a career as a firefighter, Chief Foster had many more accomplishments to his credit. Some of his professional highlights include:

- Serving as an instructor, including as lead instructor, at the Wa State Fire Academy
- Writing curriculum for the State and Federal Fire Academies that is still in use today
- Serving as the President of the Wa State Fire Chiefs Association
- Serving as the President of the Western States Fire Chiefs Association
- Pushing for the fire department to oversee the Kent Building Department
- Instituting building fire inspections to make residents safer
- Overseeing the new idea of using aid cars to provide emergency care in the Kent area and staging the aid cars at high school football games to provide quick medical assistance if needed.

Chief Foster was born on October 20, 1930 and held badge number KF0001 with our department. He will always be remembered as a gruff man who cared about his people, the public, and the fire service.

A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, June 1st, beginning at 2:00 pm. Per his request, the service will be held in the apparatus bay of Fire Station 74 (24611 116 Ave. SE Kent 98030) and is open to the public.

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