

2023 Chicago Fire Department Foundations Awards

2023 Firefighter Award of Valor

In the early morning of February 21st fire companies responded to a reported fire at 4339 N Richmond. Upon arrival they encountered a 3-story, multiple unit, apartment building with heavy smoke showing on all three floors. FF Gonzalez, assigned to the Primary Search & Rescue Team entered the building along with Engine 124 to commence fire suppression and rescue operations.

At this time fire and smoke and fire conditions were present on all three floors of the building. After forcing entry for the Engine on the second floor FF Gonzalez was directed to the third floor. The intensity of the heat and smoke required FF Gonzalez to force entry to the fire apartment while laying on his back to avoid serious burns.

With total disregard for his own personal safety FF Gonzalez started his Primary search of the 3-floor apartment. Despite punishing heat conditions FF Gonzalez pushed forward deeper into the apartment. Moments before ordered to Defensive Operations F.F. Gonzales located a victim in a 3rd. floor apartment and was able to drag the victim to the stairway where F.F. Clemens assisted in removing the victim to the street and then into Ambulance 32. The victim rescued by FF Gonzalez was transported to Swedish Covenant hospital and then transported to Loyola Medical for further treatment.

Firefighter Gonzalez performed heroically above and beyond the call to duty under extremely dangerous conditions to complete his task and save the trapped victim.

2023 Firefighter Award of Valor FF/EMT Juan Gonzalez.

On November 11th at 1912 hours T44 responded to a fire reported at 2250 W. Dayton Ave. Upon arrival it was determined the fire was located at 835 W. Belden Ave. Captain Haring of T 44 quickly began his size-up and deployment of members assigned to T 44. Capt. Haring quickly located the fire location after racing up a stairwell 3 floors as tenants retreated. Opening the door to the fire apartment, Capt. Haring, and members of T44 and E55 encountered heavy black smoke and intense heat indicating an uncontrolled fire. As E55 was stretching their 2 1/2" line to advance, Capt. Haring began following operating procedures to begin a primary search of the immediate fire-threatened area.

Relying on his experience and training, Capt. Haring deployed his Truck members to begin searching multiple areas of the apartment. Taking into account risk vs reward, Capt. Haring moved down the hallway toward the fire area, continuing his search pattern. As the uncontrolled fire began to extend out of the kitchen area to the dining room, Capt. Haring discovered an unresponsive female on the floor area located in the hallway adjoining the dining room. Disregarding the intense heat and dense smoke conditions, Capt. Haring notified the Incident commander of locating a victim and began removing her alone approximately 20 ft. to the front stairwell out of the area of danger. Capt. Haring ordered 2 members working on T 44 to remove the victim to side A for medical assistance. Capt. Haring then continued on with E55, searching for others as E55 advanced the 2 1/2" line to control the fire.

Due to the bravery, expertise, and calm under extreme conditions the victim was removed and transported to the hospital for further evaluation. It is the opinion of this Chief Officer that Capt. Haring

should be considered for the Award of Valor. Capt. Haring exemplifies what the Chicago Fire Department strives to represent - courage, strength, and professionalism under fire.

2023 Firefighter Award of Valor Captain John Haring.

2023 Paramedic Award of Valor

On September 28th Ambulance 36 with Paramedic in Charge Randie Hillison and Fire Paramedic Karen Neumann were responding to a call for medical assistance at 5532 S Wabash. As Ambulance 36 approached the intersection of 56th and Wabash gun shots rang out.

Both Hillison and Nuemann heard approximately 10-gun shots and were so close to the shooter that they saw muzzle flashes from the gun. After notifying OEMC of the situation they immediately stopped the ambulance as they witnessed a civilian hit by gunfire. As they exited the ambulance, disregarding their own safety, they started to attend to the victim who was also pregnant. Knowing the risk of treating the patient on the street they quickly assisted the pregnant victim to the safety of Ambulance 36 and retreated a few blocks away as gun shots continued.

They quickly stabilized the pregnant victim who had been shot in the back and transported her to the University of Chicago.

Paramedic in Charge Randie Hillison and Fire Paramedic Karen Nuemann performed with total disregard for their own personal safety to remove the victim from a very dangerous situation. They stabilized the victim and treated her gunshot wounds. Their action prevented a terrible situation from becoming a tragic outcome.

2023 Paramedic Award of Valor Paramedic in Charge Randie Hillison and Fire Paramedic Karen Nuemann.

2023 Firefighter of the Year Award and 2023 Paramedic of the Year Award

On July 2nd the Chicago area received as much as 8 inches of rain on Chicago's westside that caused significant flash flooding in the area. The Chicago Fire Department experienced flooded streets and viaducts throughout the westside. Companies had to navigate around to find passable streets.

Engine 96, Truck 29, and additional companies from the 7th Battalion were dispatched to a reported structure fire at 1225 N. Lavergne. Upon arrival Engine 96 reported a basement fire in an occupied building. Engine 96 immediately advanced a hose line down into the basement to contain and extinguish the fire as Truck 29 started search & rescue operations. FF Michael Gibson was advancing the nozzle to the seat of the fire when the unimaginable happened. Lieutenant Karman heard FF Gibson yell out and then saw him laying on the floor in approximately 2 to 3 feet of water from the flooded basement. Lt Karman went to FF Gibson's aid and immediately received electrical shocks as he attempted to pick him up. The entire flooded basement was energized by live electricity. Lt Karman requested a May-Day response for a downed Firefighter.

Truck 26 was assigned as the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT), which is tasked with FF rescue at all confirmed fires in Chicago. Truck 26's Officer ordered a member to pull the electrical meter on the building and deployed to the basement along with Truck 36 to rescue FF Gibson. The members of Truck 26 and Truck 36 removed FF Gibson's turnout gear and immediately began CPR as they exited the basement. He was in cardiac arrest as a result of being electrocuted.

At this time the Rapid Intervention Ambulance (Ambulance 63) was deployed to the rescue. Paramedic in Charge Steven Gutzmer and Fire Paramedic Terry Jones placed FF Gibson's lifeless body on a stretcher and treatment was started. Once inside Ambulance 63 a defibrillator was used to resuscitate the firefighter. The defibrillator was used two more times as per ACLS protocol. Both paramedics worked feverishly to resuscitate FF Gibson assisted by firefighters on the scene. Prior to transport to the hospital FF Gibson was successfully resuscitated, showed a good pulse and spontaneous breathing.

If not for the heroic actions of these members the outcome would have been much different. The Ethos of "Never Leaving a Comrade in Need" was demonstrated on July 2nd, 2023, at 1225 N Lavergne.

As a result of their professionalism and dedication to the Mission of the Chicago Fire Department the following are awarded the 2023 Firefighter of Year Award and 2023 Paramedic of the Year Award.

Captain/EMT Denijal Milat
FF/EMT Christopher Wyher
FF/EMT Tomothy Beucher
FF/EMT Brandon Gasparas
Lt./EMT David Navarro
FF Frank Carone
FF/EMT Daniel Myers
FF/EMT Michael Guzolek
FF/EMT Kevin Mayer

PIC Steven Gutzmer
FPM Terry Jones, Jr.