

St. Matthews Fire Protection District

Tribute to Assistant Chief Martin A. Kamer, Sr.

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. Last revised in 2023.

There were many people who helped with this project over the years, however 3 deserve special mention. Rick Albers, John M. Monohan, Jr. and Jack Monohan.

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 should get permission from the source.



Tribute to Assistant Chief Martin A. Kamer, Sr.

Comments from Al Ring:

Martin “Marty” A. Kamer, Sr. was a very special man. Spending most of his life in the St. Matthews area, he just plain loved the area. Most of his working life was spent with the Kroger Company where he became a well-known, respected and liked manager of the Kroger store located at 3727 Lexington Road. His other great love, beside his family was the St. Matthews Fire Department. He spent about 58 years serving the department in just about every capacity one can think of. Many articles show he joined the Department in 1937 however, I show him joining in 1935. I have noted on many of the rosters from that era, that in the 1920’s and 1930’s, many citizens helped the volunteers, but were not on the official “roster.” Either way Marty served his community for well over 50 years. Not too many individuals can say that.

Marty was not an outspoken man, however that doesn’t mean he didn’t have strong feelings about how things should be done. He respected the people above and below him in all his positions and he worked hard with and remained loyal and an extremely dependable gentleman to all. If he had a major disagreement with how things were going, he would step back and then he would eventually try another avenue. His long service and various positions show that this strategy must have been a pretty good way to get things done. One thing was for sure, while doing most things, he always had a smile on his face and treated all people with respect and made them feel at ease.

St. Matthews, Kroger and the St. Matthews Fire Department were lucky to have him in their life for as long as they did. He was a good man, one who accomplished more than most and he had a very loving family.

The following pages will include information on some of the things in Marty’s life. Enjoy them, as I am sure he did.

Immediate Family

**Martin A. Kamer, Jr., & wife Sissy, Lakeside Park, KY
David A. Kamer & wife Tamra, Louisville, KY
Patricia A. Berry & husband John, Louisville, KY
Janice M. Nordmann, & husband John, Louisville, KY
Mary Margaret Pierce & husband David, Louisville, KY
15 grandchildren
33 great grandchildren**

Assistant Chief Martin “Marty” A. Kamer, Sr. STMFD Service.

58 Years as a member of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. (1937—1995)

Board of Trustees of the Department.

**Assistant Chief
Major
Captain
Lieutenant
Fire Marshall
Public Information Officer
Firefighter
Lifetime Member**

Martin A. Kamer, Sr.

Time Line

- February 15, 1918, Martin A. Kamer, Sr. born in St. Matthews, Ky.**
- February 19, 1919, Louvinia L. Dietrich born**
 - Attended Holy Trinity Grade School**
 - 1935 (about), Joined the STMFD**
 - 1936, Graduate of Male High School**
 - 1936, Joined the Kroger Company**
 - Attended Spencerian Business College**
- September 2, 1940, Martin A. Kamer, Sr. married Louvinia L. Dietrich**
 - 1940, Became Lieutenant of the STMFD**
- July 1, 1941, Martin A. Kamer, Jr. born to Martin & Louvinia Kamer**
- April 2, 1944, Patricia A. Kamer born to Martin & Louvinia Kamer**
- March 26, 1945, Enlistment in United States Army (technical sergeant)**
- October 19, 1946, Janice M. Kamer born to Martin & Louvinia Kamer**
 - 1948, Became a member of the STMFD Board of Directors**
(Served in various capacities as Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer)
- February 10, 1952, Mary Margaret Kamer born to Martin & Louvinia Kamer**
- February 5, 1953, David A. Kamer born to Martin & Louvinia Kamer**
 - 1953, Became a Captain of the STMFD**
- 1956 Became manager of the St. Matthews Kroger Store at 3721 Lexington Road**
 - 1956, Became Assistant Chief of the STMFD**
 - 1958, Received Kroger Good Citizen Award**
 - 1972, Rejoined the STMFD Board of Directors**
- June 24, 1974, David A. Kamer, Marty's son joined the STMFD**
 - 1975, Honored by STMFD with a "Magic 70's" plaque**
(Denoting combined age and years of fire fighting experience have totaled 70)
- 1976, Served on the Membership and Firefighter's committee at the STMFD**
- 1977, Hired by the STMFD as firefighter and became Fire Marshall (inspections)**
 - February 25, 1978, Retired from the Kroger Company**
 - 1978, Received the Centennial Award at STMFD**
 - December 31, 1982, Retired as paid firefighter from STMFD**
 - July 13, 1983, Retired from the STMFD Board of Directors**
(At this time he became a non-voting life time member of the board)
 - Drove for the Funeral Auto company**
- December 8, 1983, Became Public Information Officer for STMFD**
 - 1989, Became Major on the STMFD**
 - 1995, Retired from the Fire Service**
- December 30, 2006, Louvinia L. "Sis" Kamer, died**
- November 23, 2008, Martin "Marty" A. Kamer, Sr., died**



Martin A. Kamer, Sr.

Family Tree

September 2, 1940, Martin A. Kamer, Sr. married Louvinia L. Dietrich

Martin A. Kamer Jr. married Carol A. "Sissy" Kahl on October 26, 1964

Martin D. Kamer married Dee Booker on June 14, 1996

Logan M. Kamer, July 16, 1998

Paige E. Kamer, June 8, 2000

Madison M. Kamer, September 6, 2001

Michael D. Kamer married Jennifer Watterman on April 25, 1992

Michaela D. Kamer, March 16, 1994

Brennan D. Kamer, January 5, 1998

Nolan A. Kamer, February 19, 2002

Molly J. Kamer, May 31, 2006

Matthew D. Kamer married Jill Calhoun on May 17, 1997

Adam R. Kamer, September 7, 2003

Lauren A. Kamer, September 22, 2005

Patricia A. Kamer married John J. Berry Sr., August 22, 1964

John J. Berry Jr. married Robin Henson on October 19, 1990

Andrew J. Berry, September 20, 1994

Daniel J. Berry, September 28, 1999

Melissa M. Berry married Steve Dant on September 9, 1995

Emma L. Dant, February 16, 1999

Audrey M. Dant, October 30, 2002

Claire E. Dant, December 31, 2005

Karen R. Berry

Jeffrey N. Berry

Janice M. Kamer married John B. Nordmann on June 1, 1968

Amy Lynn Nordmann married Darren Branger on August 27, 1993

Megan C. Branger, January 28, 1996

Eric J. Branger, May 27, 1998

Ashley E. Branger, September 15, 2000

Natalie R. Branger, August 9, 2004

Sarah L. Nordmann

Nichole L. Nordmann married Jason Knight on August 9, 1996

Zachary T. Knight, January 19, 2000

Allison B. Knight, May 8, 2002

Mary Margaret Kamer married James A. Bowlin on April 8, 1972, married F. David Pierce on April 26, 1986

Jason T. Bowlin married Christina Crump on September 8, 2001

Brandy D. Bowlin, June 24, 2004

Sarah R. Pierce married Douglas Mann on October 21, 1995

Johnathon D. Mann, March 3, 1997

Samantha N. Mann, January 13, 2000

F. Benjamin Pierce married Stephanie Chesher on November 15, 1997

F. Blake Pierce, April 9, 1998

Brooklyn S. Pierce, June 27, 2002

Brody J. Pierce, December 11, 2008

David A. Kamer married Tamra A. Deuser on April 28, 1978

Misty J. Kamer married Eddie Tudor on September 3, 2004

Cody L. Tudor, June 2, 2005

Kira A. Tudor, December 17, 2008

D.J. Kamer married Carrie Davis on April 21, 2007

Kain Ellis, July 16, 1996

Alyssa Pedro, May 23, 2000

Kaelin Holland, October 14, 2001

Cameron Murphy, November 15, 2002

Jordan Murphy, February 10, 2004

Martin A. Kamer, Sr.

A Few Comments

“While I didn’t know him as a firefighter, I did know him when I was a yongster and I shopped with my Mother at the Kroger Store in St. Matthews where Marty was the Manager. At that time we were a volunteer fire department and when the siren sounded Marty would run. Marty was always very pleasant and courteous to my Mother and she liked him very much. If he was half the firefighter that he was a Kroger Store Manager than all is well.” Tom Eifler, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, St. Matthews Fire Protection District.

“Besides being one heck of a guy, he was dependable, loyal and always there.” Jack Monohan, former Assistant Chief of St. Matthews Fire Protection District and present Trustee.

“Marty typified the community-oriented volunteer firefighter of his day. His dedicaiton served as a a model for those of us that worked with him.” Chief Russ Rakestraw, former Major of the St. Matthews Fire Department, present Chief, Lyndon Fire & Rescue.

“I remember “Mr. Kamer,” the Kroger Store manager who always greeted us with a smile. I thought it was “really cool” when the fire siren sounded and Marty left the store headed to a fire.”

“My Dad explained to me about Marty’s two leadership roles in the community, as a Kroger Manager and Assistant Fire Chief. I was in awe of him and also amazed how a fellow who was a “boss” could be so “down to earth” and just plain nice. I thought bosses were supposed to be mean. Marty sure shot that stereotype to pieces!”

“Everyone who grew up in St. Matthews knew Marty. He was a community icon. I never heard anyone say anything negative about him. He was one of those rare individuals whose kindness, compassion and desire to help other folks made him stand out without any real fanfare. He was really someone that you wanted to emulate – the best of the best of role models.” Chief Rick Albers, former Captain of the St. Matthews Fire Department, present Chief, North Oldham Fire Protection District.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr.

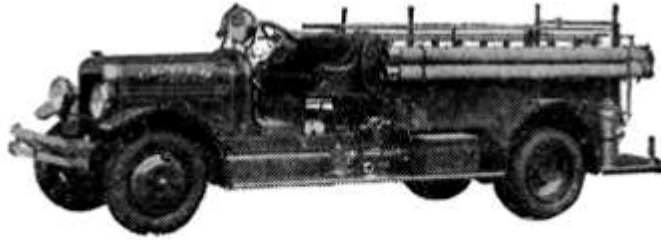
DR. JAS. E. WINTER, President JOS. B. ZEHNDER, Vice-President THOMAS L. DOBSON, Secretary FRED C. BOSS, Treasurer

St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association

Incorporated

DIRECTORS

DR. JAS. E. WINTER
JOE ZEHNDER
FRED C. BOSS
THOMAS L. DOBSON
EDWIN W. DAVIS
WM. SMITHSON
W. J. OGDEN
LOUIS H. SCHWEITZER



OFFICERS FIRE DEPT.

"BUD" YOUNG, Chief
HENRY MONOHAN, Asst. Chief
IRVIN BAUER, Captain
MARTIN KAMER, Lieutenant

ST. MATTHEWS, KY.

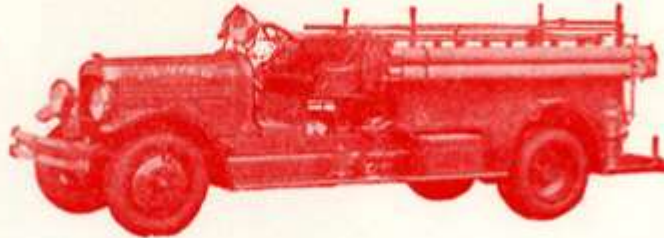
ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

INCORPORATED

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
LOUIS H. SCHWEITZER
GEORGE E. MILLER
J. P. TERRY
JOE ZEHNDER
MARTY KAMER

P. O. Box 115
St. Matthews, Ky.



Martin "Marty" A. Kamer, Sr.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1924)



Marty 6 years old with his parents
Peter and Margaret Kamer

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1938/39)



Marty and friends on road trip.



Marty in new jump suit, 1939.



Marty and new auto in 1938.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1939)



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

They arrived Sunday, spotless white coveralls with St. Mathews Volunteer Fire Department in red letters on the back and the wearers name in red on the chest. The coveralls may be carried in the firefighters car and slipped on at a moments notice, providing complete practical safety. The department also has some new safety raincoats with white strips in the body of the seat, aiding in visibility.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1940)



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.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1941)

June 13, 1941

Mr. R. M. Young, Chief
St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Dept.
St. Matthews, Ky.

Dear Sir;

Your attention is called to a ruling of the Association wherein all applicants for membership in the fire company must be approved and accepted by the Board of Directors before they can be members of the company. Names of those desiring to become members must be submitted to the board by you or your assistant Chief, at a regular meeting.

The following men have been approved and accepted;

R. M. Young
Henry A. Monohan
Martin Kamer
John Beierle
John M. Mohohan, Jr.
Richard Herdt

Rudolph Lineback
William F. Leitsch
Wilmer R. Herdt
George Wurster
Fred Wootton
T. H. Huffman, Sr.
Roy C. Pennington

Your compliance and cooperation in the above is earnestly requested.

By order of the Board of Directors

ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSN.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (Kroger)



Marty at first Kroger he managed.



**THE KROGER STORE
St. Matthews, Kentucky**

This is a very early photo of the Kroger Store on Lexington Road where Marty managed.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (Kroger)



Marty & crew.



Marty after a long hard day at Kroger.



Marty & Kaye Mullins, 1955.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1948)

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION, Incorporated, HELD ON AUGUST 4, 1948.

The Annual Meeting was called to order by the President, Mr. John M. Monohan, Jr. and in the absence of Mr. R. C. Schlich, Mr. George E. Miller substituted as Secretary. The following directors were elected for the coming year:

Mr. John M. Monohan, Jr.
Mr. Leland Wilson
Mr. Fred H. Boss
Mr. Louis H. Schweitzer
Mr. J. B. Terry
Mr. Joe Zehnder
Mr. Marty Kramer
Mr. George E. Miller

Motion was made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Terry that we employ a full-time secretary at a salary of \$200.00 per month and twenty percent (20%) of all collections over \$6,000.00. This secretary to be a man who will be capable of taking in the collections, solicit collections and work the entire district at least once every three months.

A committee was appointed by Mr. Monohan, consisting of Mr. Terry, Mr. Wilson and Mr. George E. Miller, to whom this man would be directly responsible and said committee to employ the man and see that the work is properly carried out. Temporarily, his office will be at the Fire House and he will be expected to put in five full days a week and, if necessary, a half-day on Saturday.

A motion was made by Mr. Monohan and seconded by Mr. Wilson that a group of firemen be appointed to meet at all directors meetings - John Westerman, John Westwood, John Herdt and Richard Hert. This was done in order to bring closer contact between the firemen and the directors.

Mr. Marty Kramer, who is one of the firemen, was chosen for the first time to serve on the Board of Directors. He was chosen, due to the fact that he is the oldest volunteer fireman in service not on the Board of Directors.

Your Home May Be Next!

Support your

Volunteer Firemen

Subscribe NOW!

Minimum Charge of \$25.00 Will Be Charged Non-Subscribers In Answering Alarm
Each Apartment In A Building Must Be An Individual Subscriber

SUBSCRIPTION
\$3.00
PER YEAR



SUBSCRIPTION
\$3.00
PER YEAR

Dial "0" (Operator) Ask for St. Matthews Fire Dept.

PAYABLE AT

Terry's Texaco Station
Frankel's Drug Store

Ashbury-Berman Drugs
Colonial Federal Saving & Loan Assn.

Or Mail Checks to P. O. Box 115, Louisville 7, Ky.

ST. MATTHEWS Volunteer Fire Association

JOHN M. MONOHAN, Chief

Directors

GEORGE MILLER

FRED BOSS

E. WILSON

JOE ZEHNDER

J. P. TERRY

MARTIN KAEMER

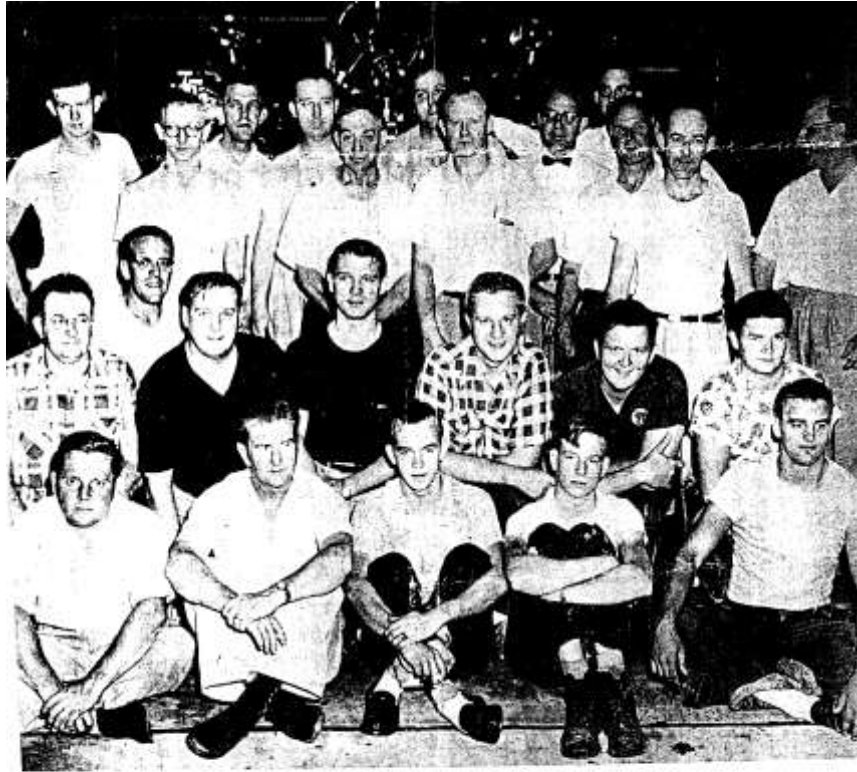
LOUIS SCHWEITZER

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (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.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1952)



**MEMBERS OF THE ST. MATTHEWS
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

- Fire Prevention Week -

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

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (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 in the community, you would be paying 200-300 percent more for your fire insurance. YOU received these savings. And yes, this is YOUR new building. Come out Sunday . . . look it over . . . and you'll be as proud of it as your Volunteer Firemen are!

From left: Joe Zehnder, J. P. Terry, George Miller, Leland Wilson, Louis Schweitzer, John Monahan, Jr., Marty Kamer, 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 wonderful 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. P. Terry, Martin Kamer, Louis Schweitzer, Joe Zehnder.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (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.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (February, 1953)

February 22, 1953: Seven year old Eleanor Abell died of suffocation from smoke in her room over the breezeway in her home on Overlook Rd. in Mockingbird Valley. A later *Courier-Journal* article suggested that the Louisville Fire Department had to borrow air masks from St. Matthews Fire Department at the scene of the fire. Louisville Battalion Chief Browning denied this. (NOTE: Louisville Fire Department had self-contained breathing apparatus.) Overbook Pictures



Feb-



February 1953: Unknown date or newspaper: Safety Chief Denies Lack Of Gas Mask. Safety Director James E. Thornberry denied today that the Louisville Fire Department lacked a gas mask at a fire in the Mockingbird Valley home of Dr. and Mrs. Irvin Abell, Jr., February 21.

At yesterday's beef session, W. T. Embry, 2725 Brownsboro Road, said City Company 21, of 2620 Frankfort, was the first to arrive at the fire in which the Abell's 7-year old daughter was suffocated, but had to wait for a gas mask until the arrival of the volunteer company from St. Matthews.

Thornberry said all quad and truck companies are equipped with masks, and quoted from a report of Second District Battalion Chief C. L. Browning that "our gas masks were in service before the arrival of the St. Matthews Fire Department."

Embry offered to donate a mask to Company 21. (Note: St. Matthews Firefighter Marty Kamer rescued the young girl.)

February & March: Note: After this incident, many residents of the Mockingbird Valley area sent in checks and tried to join the St. Matthews fire protection area. However, all checks were returned to the residents.

February 26, 1953, *The Voice Of St. Matthews:*

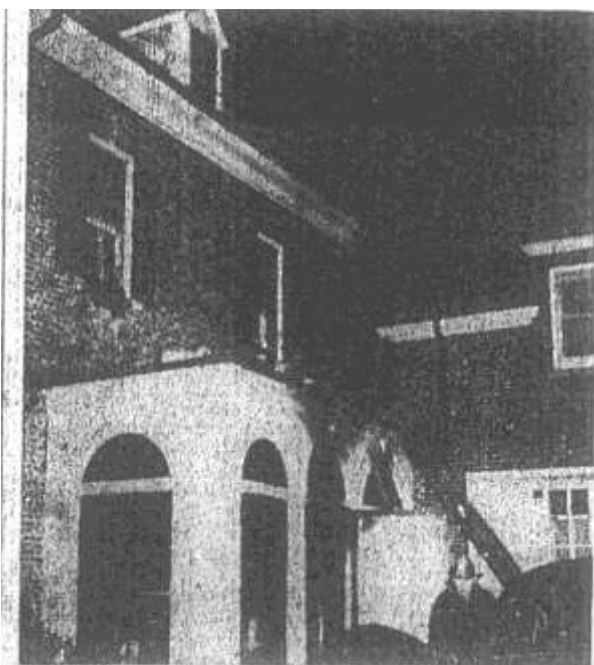
MARTY'S COURAGE, by Chief Rick Albers

Although he was deserving of such, he never sought any recognition or notoriety for his service. I recall sitting with Marty at the funeral home when Sis died and we talked for almost 2 hours about...what else...but firefighting. He related the story of a house fire that occurred in 1950 in the Mockingbird Valley area of Louisville. The home belonged to a prominent local physician and the fire trapped the doctor's 9-year old daughter inside. Louisville Fire Department Engine 21 & Quad 6 responded, equipped with canister style masks but could not reach the little girl due to the extreme heat and reduced oxygen inside.

St. Matthews VFD had only recently acquired new fully self contained breathing apparatus or "Scott Air Packs." Marty responded when St. Matthews was alerted to this fire. Marty told of donning one of these air packs, entering the burning home and searching for the little girl. He successfully rescued her from the fire, and she was rushed to the hospital.

Another St. Matthews VFD innovation of the day was the use of radio telephones on the fire trucks. Marty explained that following the rescue, the girl's father called the hospital using the radio, giving them her medical history, instructions for her care and other vital information which enabled them to be ready for her immediately upon her arrival at the emergency room. Marty recounted with sadness that these efforts were ultimately in vain as the young girl succumbed to her injuries.

He recalled the details of this event as if it happened yesterday. When I said that I thought he was heroic, he downplayed that idea stating that he was just doing what he had been trained to do. He sought no special recognition for that rescue or anything else he did. Helping people was reward enough. Classic Marty!!



—Photo by Tom Redman

THE FATAL ROOM—Seven-year-old Eleanor Abell died of suffocation in this room over the breezeway of her father's home in Mockingbird Valley Sunday night. St. Matthews firemen Marty Kamer and John Kester, along with county detectives and Louisville firemen, found her here after a desperate battle to cool the room enough to enter. Dr. Irvin Abell, after saving his other two children, and nearly being overcome himself, directed rescuers to the above room. The breezeway here, though apparently intact, is pulled inside. Had Eleanor been able to open one of the two windows, she might have gotten enough oxygen to save herself. Firemen say she would have burned herself severely had she climbed to the hot roof of the breezeway. Kamer carried her out of the house, but she died enroute to the hospital. Funeral services were held Tuesday morning at Holy Spirit Church. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (December 16, 1954)

December 16 1954

Mr. A. Clemens, Engineer
Ky, Inspection Bureau
Louisville Ky,

Dear Clem;

Here is a list of the Board of Directors, and the available Day Men.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

John M Monohan Jr Pres,
Marty Kamer Vice-Pres.
Geo. Miller, Sec'y Board.
Fred C. Boss, Tress.
J. P. Terry
Joe Zehnder
Louis Schweitzer
W. Leland Wilson
Meet every 2nd Thursday
of each month.

Available Day Men.

J. P. Terry, Captain
John Westerman, Captain
Marty Kamer, Lt.
John V. Kaster, Lt.
~~Wm. Writzer~~
Ed Foley
Melch. Zehnder
Dick Wheeler
Phil Resch
Jack Monohan
Walter Fletcher
John Carr
Randy Florence
Robt. White
Pete Blackwell
Walter Wernert
Kent Tully
Geo. Haerberlin
Albert Haerberlin
Mel Shrode

There is an enrollment of 45 men, and all are available after
5 P.M.

Believe this will help your files.

Yours very truly

V.A. Beam
Captain V.A. Beam, Asst' Sec'y.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1955)



Marty Kamer

Martin Kramer Named Assistant Fire Chief

The Board of Directors of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department appointed Martin A. Kamer, 20-year-veteran of the department, assistant fire chief.

Mr. Kamer, a 38-year-old native of St. Matthews, will replace Richard Hunt as the active assistant to the Chief. The board made the change when it felt that the more strenuous and hazardous duties of assistant Fire Chief could be handled better by a "younger man." Mr. Hunt will retain his old title, however, and will assist in administrative functions.

As assistant fire chief, Kamer will be Chief John Monohan's right-hand man in complete operations both at the station and at the scene of fires. Upon his appointment, Mr. Kamer praised the work on his predecessor and said that he "would to the best of (his)

ability attempt to relieve some of the pressures on the Chief in protecting the lives and property of the community."

Mr. Kamer, who is one of the Fire Department's "old timers," started putting out fires when he was 18. In 1954, he was captain of the department and is currently vice-president of the Volunteer Firemen's Association.

A graduate of Louisville Male High School in 1937, Mr. Kamer is employed by the Kroger Co. He is now manager of the St. Matthews store on Lexington Road.

He is married and has five children, three girls and two boys. The Kamers live at 4103 Hillsboro Rd.

March 22, 1956, *The Voice Of St. Matthews*

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (Dancing the night away)

“We all used to go dancing to Swiss music, doing the waltz and polkas till our feet would hurt.”



Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1957)



Photo by Charles Stone

May 7, 1957, All Chiefs, no Indians in this picture as the Lions Club honored the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. Left to right, they are: Marty A. Kamer, assistant chief; Harry Neal, president of the St. Matthews Lions Club; John M. Monohan, Jr., chief of the Volunteers, and Clint Thaxton, vice president of the Lions.



Marty A. Kamer, Sr. 1958

Volunteer fireman and policeman—

Marty Kamer was St. Matthews' most valuable citizen last week

Martin "Marty" Kamer was the most valuable man in St. Matthews for at least a 24-hour period last week.

In that time, he helped send one criminal to jail, helped catch a second alleged criminal, and helped direct the St. Matthews Volunteer Firemen in battling a major fire.

It began Thursday evening, when Mr. Kamer, manager of the Kroger store on Lexington Road, appeared at St. Matthews Police Court.

He gave testimony against Clayton Howard Pence, 20, of Henryville, Ind. Pence was accused of stealing cigarettes from Mr. Kamer's store the week before. Mr. Kamer had helped catch the accused man himself, and his testimony Thursday got Pence 30 days in jail for petty larceny.

The next morning the Eagles Club caught on fire. Mr. Kamer is assistant chief of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department. Working under Chief John Monohan, Jr., he labored from about 8 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. in helping direct the attack on the fire.

Returning to his work at Kroger's, he was approached at 3:30 p.m. by a man, later booked as Bruce J. Tippet of West Virginia, with a postal money order for \$80.

Examining the money order closely, Mr. Kamer saw that it had been tampered with.

He checked it against the list of serial numbers of stolen money orders furnished Kroger's by the postal authorities. The serial number on Tippet's order didn't correspond to any number on the list.

Still, because of evidence that it had been tampered with, he wouldn't cash it, but after taking down the number, returned it to Tippet, who left the store.

He sent his assistant, Paul Cramer, to tail Tippet in case the man tried to take the money order

to another St. Matthews store. But Tippet didn't try any other stores.

He got his car, where his wife and two sons, aged 8 and 12, were waiting for him, and drove off.

Mr. Kamer went outside and spotted Mrs. Carolyn Haerberlin, St. Matthews police officer. He told her what had happened, and while they talked, they saw the Tippet car moving along Frankfort Avenue.

The two of them got in Mr. Kamer's car and followed Tippet and finally stopped him on Lexington Road. Mrs. Haerberlin arrested him and took him to the police station. Tippet denied he had a money order or had been in Kroger's.

The police shook him down and found the stub of a money order for \$8. The serial number corresponded with the money order for \$80 he'd tried to cash with Mr. Kamer.

Tippet still denied having any money order. Police searched his car and found a money order torn to bits under the front seat. They pieced it together and discovered it was the same money order Tippet had tried to cash.

Tried Saturday on a charge of breach of peace by St. Matthews judge Thomas Speckman, he pleaded not guilty. Judge Speckman filed the charges away with leave to reinstate and turned the man over to postal inspector W. B. Walker, Jr. for prosecution.

"We still don't know what his name really is," said Mr. Kamer. "His wife said she married him under the name of Williams. His driver's license was for Bruce J. Tippet. The money order was under the name of William Rice, and we found identification on him that his name was Campbell."

The man's wife and children were released.

Now Mr. Kamer has dropped his duties as volunteer policeman and fireman for a while to devote his time to the job that pays his salary—running a grocery store.

Boss thinks he's valuable too



His employers also think Marty Kamer is a valuable man. At left is the Kroger good citizen award.



St. Matthews assistant fire chief Marty Kamer, right, serves potato salad to, from left, St. Matthews chief John M. Monohan, Jr., Major William J. Cummings of Louisville, and fireman Richard Taylor of Quad 10, Bowman Field.

'We're all doing the same job'

Firemen of two Cities get together

St. Matthews and Louisville firemen had a social and business get-together one night last week at the St. Matthews firehouse.

Altogether there were about 20 Louisville men and 40 from St. Matthews. The local men served a buffet supper and refreshments to their Louisville guests.

Said Major William J. Cummings, assistant Louisville fire chief:

"Inasmuch as we are working together and fighting fires to-

gether, we have come out here to meet with the St. Matthews firemen and to discuss practical procedures."

The Louisville firemen were from two companies—Quad 10 at Bowman Field and Engine 21 at Frankfort and Franck Avenues. These three companies fight fires in overlapping areas and come to each other's aid in case of emergency.

"Some of our men have been here before, but the Chief and I talked about getting the com-

panies together and going over the equipment," said Major Cummings.

The Louisville men brought with them two pieces of equipment for the St. Matthews men to examine, and they in turn inspected St. Matthews' equipment.

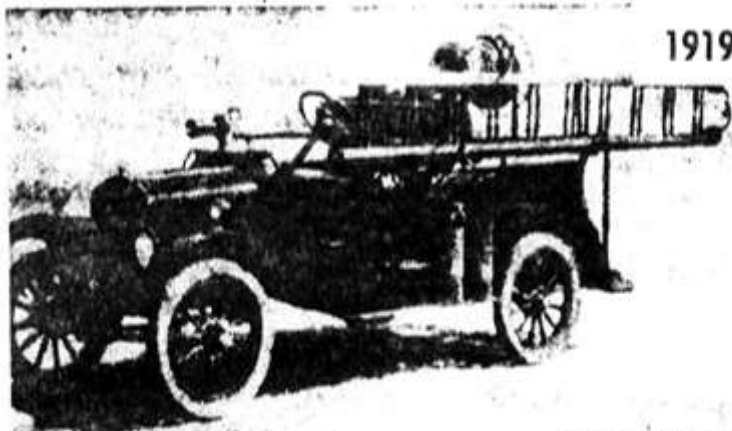
The Louisville firemen help the local volunteers with training problems and St. Matthews has been using Louisville's drill towers.

"After all, we're all doing the same job," said Major Cummings.

GUARDING THE ST. MATTHEWS COMMUNITY

for

40 YEARS!



1919

ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

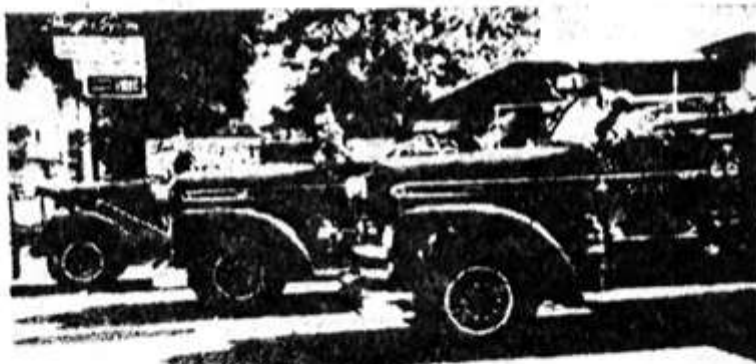
OFFICERS

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

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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

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 12, 1959)

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.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (March 10, 1960)



MARTY KAMER

been in on just about every major fire the Department has fought during these years.

Twenty-three years ago, he lived next door to the chief, (who was then Andy Neichter), went out on a couple of runs with him, and then was asked by the chief to join. He did. He has never regretted the decision, and the 23 years have brought him many memories, good and bad.

The good part has been the comradeship and the chance to serve his community. The bad part has been the fires.

The biggest one was the burning of the Walser Building on New Year's Eve a few years ago. The one that sticks most vividly in his mind was the fire that destroyed Dr. Abell's house in Mockingbird Valley. One of the little Abell girls was killed in that fire, and Mr. Kamer was the man who carried her from the building. Neither he, nor any of the other volunteers, will ever forget that one.

Now living at 4103 Hillsboro and attending Our Lady of Lourdes church, Mr. Kamer for more than four years has been manager of the Kroger store on Lexington Road. He has two sons and three daughters.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1963)

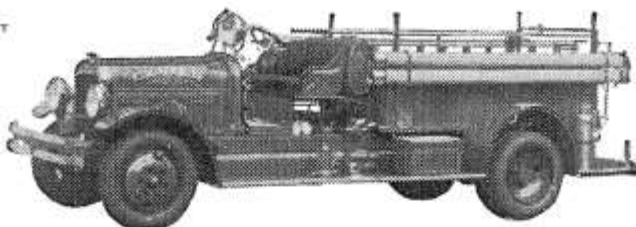
ST. MATTHEWS VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

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MARTY KAMER, VICE PRESIDENT
FRED C. BOSS, TREASURER
GEORGE E. MILLER, SECRETARY

CAPT. V. A. BEAM
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

INCORPORATED



DIRECTORS

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

117 St. Matthews Ave.
St. Matthews, Ky.

May 11, 1963

RESOLUTIONS

Whereas, It has pleased God in His infinite wisdom to call home our Friend and Brother, Joseph B. Zehnder, and

Whereas, this association and the citizens of the St. Matthews community has lost a devoted member dedicated to the Safety and Welfare of all people within the confines of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department.

Be it Resolved, That we express herein our sincere sympathy to the Family and the Citizens of St. Matthews for this great loss, and be it further,

Resolved, That a copy of these Resolutions be sent to the family, a copy to the local press, and a copy spread on the records of the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association.

Signed; Board of Directors, St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association

John M. Monohan, Jr.

President

Marty Kamer

Vice President

Fred C. Boss

Treasurer

J. P. Terry

W. Leland Wilson

Henry A. Monohan

George E. Miller

Secretary

"ORGANIZED FOR YOUR PROTECTION"

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1963/64)

1963: Left to right: Walling, Kamer, Von Allmen, Engnehl, Cardwell, Schneider, Phil Iwan at training fire.



1964: 117 St. Matthews

Avenue



Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (Various Fire Reports)

ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT
 Date 1-16-59
 A. M. 8:05 P. M. Returned 9:10
 Location 535 N Hubbard Ln
 Owner _____
 Signed _____
 Occupant James Lawson E
 Signed _____
 Building or Property 2 Boosters
800' of 2 1/2" draft from Creek.
31 + 2 + 4
 Cause Unknown
✓ galdie Lawson
 Special Notes _____
 Officer in Charge Asst Chief M. Kamer

ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT ¹¹⁹
 Date 12-7-61
 Time 9:23 ~~AM~~ P.M. Returned 11:05 ~~AM~~ P.M.
 Location 422 Brockbridge La
 Owner R.G Vatter
 Signed _____
 Occupant _____
 Signed x R G Vatter
 Building or Property _____
Bedroom on second floor
Clothing + contents - smoke
damage - fire confined to one
Company Response Room
 Equipment Used _____
 Hose 2 1/2" 450 Ft. 1 1/2" 150 Ft.
 Remarks S-1 S-2 S-4 S-5
 Officer in Charge Asst Chief Kamer

¹⁶⁰ ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT
 Date 5-22-61
 A. M. 10:18 P. M. 12:07
 Location 706 Fountain
 Owner _____
 Signed _____
 Occupant Coy Bishop
 Signed _____
 Building or Property _____
House
 Cause _____
 Special Notes _____
Called by Lyndon to assist
S-1
 Officer in Charge Asst Chief Kamer

¹⁰ ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT
 Date 5-28-62
 P. M. 3:31 P. M. 4:25
 Location 225 Cherokee Ln
 Owner St. Matthews Fire + Sec
 Signed [Signature]
 Occupant _____
 Signed _____
 Building or Property _____
Building -
 Cause Crack of Puffball
 Special Notes Loft 1000 ft 2 1/2"
S-1 S-4 S-6
 Officer in Charge Asst Chief Kamer

¹²¹ ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT
 Date 9-6-62
 A. M. 2:12 P.M. P. M. 3:07
 Location 228 Menahan
 Owner Frederick Hall Sr
 Signed _____
 Occupant _____
 Signed Mr. Fred L. Hall Sr
 Building or Property _____
Fire in Basement under
living room fireplace
 Cause _____
 Special Notes _____
S-1 S-4 S-6
 Officer in Charge Asst Chief Kamer

⁹ ST. MATTHEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT
 Date 1/1/64
 Time 2:51 ~~AM~~ P.M. Returned 6:13 ~~AM~~ P.M.
 Location 4625 Shelbyville Rd
 Owner Embassy Club
(Former Rocket Club)
 Signed _____
 Occupant _____
 Signed _____
 Building or Property _____
Lyndon 1005 at
scene
 Company Response _____
 Equipment Used 5-1 X 5-4 X 5-5
5-2 X 5-6 -
 Hose 2 1/2" 1500 Ft. 1 1/2" 400 Ft.
 Remarks 400 FT Booster
2 - Smoke Ejectors -
2 - Generators
 Officer in Charge Asst. Chief
M. Kamer

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1975)



April 10, 1975: The department held its 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.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1977)



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 Haerberlin, Kent Monohan, Mike Davis, Jim Hytken, Jack Monohan, Bob Wheatley, Chuck Kuhn, Frank Florence

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (March 2, 1978)

March 2, 1978: *The Voice*, by Don Krider: “I’ve seen it grow from a cornfield” Kamer ends 42-year St., Matthews Career. Forty-two years with Kroger. Sixty with St. Matthews. “That’s how much time Martin Kamer Sr., manager of the Kroger store in St. Matthews, 3721 Lexington Road, has given to his employer and to his community.

“I started out when I was in high school,” he recalls. “I like the work and I enjoy helping people in the community.”

Kamer, 60, came to work for Kroger in 1936 as a clerk and February 25 was his last day on the job. He had attended Male High School prior to joining Kroger. At the time he joined the company, he was either 17 or 18, he said.

Kroger and Kamer took a liking to each other right off. Within a year, Kamer had been promoted to manager of the Kroger store on the corner of Hickory and Burnett in Germantown.

He has been the manager of various Kroger stores in the country ever since, coming to the 32-year-old St. Matthews branch as manager 22 years ago.

Why has he returned to St. Matthews so often? “I was born and raised here in St. Matthews,” he stresses. “I’ve seen it grow from a cornfield to what we have here now.” Asked if he missed the cornfield, Kamer laughed, “no, if St. Matthews hadn’t grown, things would probably be pretty boring right now.”

Kamer has raised three daughters and two sons with his wife of 38 years, Louvinia. They live at 4103 Hillsboro Road. Both his sons have joined Kroger, following in their father’s footsteps.

His oldest son, Martin, 32, is employed by the general office in Cincinnati. He previously was manager of the Kroger stores at Bardstown Road and Douglas and at Westport Road, near Plantation. His youngest son, David, 25, is an employee of the Kroger store on Brownsboro Road. Kamer’s five children have given him 11 grandchildren.

When Kamer was a young, new store manager in 1937, stores often offered certain fruits when only in season, sold canned goods, milk and most basic food items. Today, he says, fruits are available year round and Kroger’s shelves are stocked with items like frozen dinners, which were virtually non-existent in 1937.

Kamer’s partnership with Kroger was interrupted by World War II and he went off to serve in the army from 1944-46, reaching the rank of technical sergeant.

Kamer has seen more changes in Kroger’s management program. Whereas he was promoted based on his employer’s belief in his potential, he said today’s managers must complete a two-year management training course before qualifying for management promotions.

Kamer would like to see his store expand, but he doubts that will happen because several years of trying to purchase surrounding property have been unsuccessful.

Still, Kamer has no complaints about his association with Kroger. “To my way of thinking,” he offers. “It’s been good to have been associated with them so long.”

Kamer retired on Saturday, February 25, after 42 years as a Kroger employee. “I’m sure I’ll miss it,” he laments. “But I’ll come back and have some fun with the employees.”

His future plans include making good use of his several weeks paid vacation time that he has coming to him after he retires. “I’ll be trying to enjoy life without killing myself,” he says. “I’ll probably take a part-time job in sales after I rest for awhile.

A new manager hasn’t been selected yet, he said, adding that he hoped the new manager would be a local resident, but noting that he could come from out of state.

One of his joys is being a member of both the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department and the department’s board of directors. Kamer joined the department in 1937 and was its assistant chief from 1957 to 1964. He’s been fighting fires ever since joining, noting that he had just fought two fires this past Sunday.

For a man who likes to help people, the department was just another way of serving the community.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (1983)

1983: 8899 Training Vehicle & Crew: Lt. Kent Dayton, Sgt. Charlie Davis, Marshal Marty Kamer, Larry Heaphy



Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (July 13, 1983)

July 13, 1983

Mr. Bill Sparks
Pres. St. Matthews Vol. Fire Assn.

Dear Sir:

Since my term as a director of the St. Matthews Vol. Fire Assn. expires on this date and to abide by Section 10 of the By-Laws, I want to announce that I decline being elected for another term. Instead I elect to become a lifetime non-voting Director.

Having served for many years I feel it is time someone younger and more capable take my place.

It has been a pleasure and I wish the best for all concerned.

Yours truly
Marty Kamer

Marty Kamer

*Approved
W. Sparks*

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 18, 1987)

November 18, 1987: *The New Voice*, by Tom Stephens, Firefighter honored for more than 50 years of service: In 1937, Marty Kamer, a high school student in his teens, joined the St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Department.

On Tuesday, the Kiwanis Club of St. Matthews honored Kamer, still a member of the department, for his 50 years of service.

At noon-time luncheon scheduled to have been held yesterday at the St. Matthews Community Center on Ten Pin Lane, the club named Kamer "Firefighter of the Year," and annual distinction awarded by the Kiwanis Club to a worthy recipient.

Kamer, now fire marshal and public information officer with the department, has served in many capacities throughout his career.

He has been a lieutenant, captain, and was assistant chief from 1957 to 1964.

Kamer reminisced recently about the changes in the area he has witnessed during his half century of protecting the community.

St. Matthews in the late 1930s was a rural, primarily farming community. The land bordering Shelbyville Road was mainly used for growing corn and potatoes.

"There were not that many houses and a lot of wooded areas years ago," Kamer recalled. "We usually had brush fires or fires in barns then."

The veteran firefighter also has witnessed many changes in the department. "When I started, we had one truck and a little garage," Kamer recalled.

The St. Matthews Fire District now has two trucks, four engines and a modern facility on Lyndon Way. In addition, a second fire house is to be built near the corner of Brownsboro Road and Hubbards Lane.

There also have been many changes in firefighting techniques during the past 50 years, Kamer noted.

"Years ago, when we would come to a fire, we would go on in (and attack the fire inside the house)," Kamer related. "But now, because of the plastics and synthetics that are being used in houses that put out so many toxic gases, we wouldn't do that."

There are a few incidents during this career that Kamer said he will never forget. One occurred around 1952 and involved a house on fire and a little girl trapped. He told the story with emotion and amazing detail. When firefighters arrived at the fire, they were told that two young children had not come out of the house. Several men entered the house to find and rescue the children.

One of the children had escaped the flames and was safe, but Kamer found the other one, a 6-year old girl, in an upstairs bedroom. "I brought her down from the second floor and laid her down. She was a little blond headed girl. And when I laid her down, I could see my own little girl lying there," Kamer remembered.

He said he later learned that the girl died after being taken to a hospital.

Kamer, who had joined the department while still in high school, likes to encourage young men to get involved in organizations such as the fire department.

"That would be a good hobby to have," he said. "At least he'd be doing something for his fellow neighbor and the community."

Now, with a half-century of service behind him, Kamer is receiving recognition for his unselfishness, his good citizenship and his caring attitude.

"He is a pretty fine citizen," said Chief Franklin Florence of the St. Matthews Fire District. "Personally, he is a very warm, giving person."

Kamer, however, said he was surprised by the recognition. "It's great," he said. "I sure didn't expect anything like that to come up." Fifty years of involvement in any organization is unusual, but Kamer said he doesn't feel out of the ordinary.

"It's where I spent my time," he said. "The fire department is the only hobby I've ever had."



Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (June 10, 1989)

The St. Matthews Volunteer Fire Association was incorporated in 1919 to formally furnish fire suppression to the St. Matthews area. From its very humble beginning the firefighters have always served the community and have proven to be leaders and innovators in the fire service. Many dedicated individuals have given of their time, talent and skills to deliver the very best and most cost-effective fire protection for all those served.

The original non-profit corporation was dissolved in 1985 with the formation of St. Matthews Fire Protection District 26.

1989 continues to provide an extension of service with the opening of Fire Station 262.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Alan D. Ring

John Barker
Marshall P. Eldred, Jr.
Faye Ellerkamp

Franklin R. Florence, Sr.
John M. Monohan, III
James P. Graven

Chief Franklin R. Florence, Sr.
Assistant Chief John M. Monohan, III

STAFF OFFICERS

Major Marty Kamer
Major Michael Noland
Major Kenny Strange
Marshall A. E. Andriot
Marshal Denny Engnehl

LINE OFFICERS

Major Sam McCune
Major Bill Seng
Captain Keith McBride
Captain Dwayne Alan Reed
Captain Joseph R. Wolfe
Lieut. Ed Brown, Sr.
Lieut. Hal Clifford
Lieut. J. Stuart Monohan
Lieut. Ron Unthank
Lieut. John K. Volkerding, Jr.
Sgt. Charlie Davis
Sgt. Dave Kamer
Sgt. Kent Monohan
Sgt. Patrick H. Noland
Sgt. Don Ryan, Jr.

FIREFIGHTERS

Mike Beneke
Blaine Bishop
Moss Clore
Jackie DeHart
Dan Doyle
David B. Dugan
C. Brent Florence
Frank A. Flynn
Tony Glass
David Head
Lawrence I. Heaphy
Todd Holderfield
Sherrill Kidwell
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Brian Tarpey
Kevin Tarpey
Lawrence S. Trageser
Michael Willinger
James H. Whitlock

Dedication Ceremonies St. Matthews Fire Station 262 Saturday, June 10, 1989



Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (September 22, 1993)

September 22, 1993: *New Voice*, by Anne Scholtz: Four longtime firemen to be honored October 10. Four lifetime members of the St. Mathews Fire District will be honored at an open house on Sunday, October 10, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the fire station, at 240 sears Avenue.

“We are sending an open invitation to all the fire districts in the community,” said fire chief Bill Seng, one of the organizers of the event.

He expects about 250 people to come to the cake and punch-type party honoring Jack Monohan, Marty Kamer, Denny Engnehl and Bill Andriot.

Monohan served the department from Jun 3, 1951, to June 3, 1993. His father, uncle and brother were on the force in the past and his two sons are now.

Kamer is still with the department he joined in 1937, although he no longer fights fires. “It was the only real hobby that I had,” he said.

As a teen-ager, Kamer lived next door to the then fire chief. “He talked me into it,” Kamer said.

Kamer volunteered for the fire department during the time he worked for the Kroger Co. He retired from store management in 1978 and worked in a paid position at the fire department from the beginning of 1979 until the end of 1982.

Engnehl began his career as a volunteer fireman in August, 1949. A former Lincoln Federal Savings and Loan employee, he retired in 1988 and devoted his time to his two hobbies; firefighting and boating. His father lived across the street for a fire station and every time there was a call he would go to watch. Engnehl soon went along with his dad and the fascination was born. He joined the fire district when he moved to St. Matthews because “I was going to go anyway, this way I got in the front row,” he said.

After 44 years with the fire district, he is a marshal now, doing safety and public relations. “They won’t let us climb ladders,” Engnehl said.

Andriot started volunteering in 1958. A former employee of the old Thornbury Toys in St. Matthews, he is known as the fireman on the store’s Thorny Bucks.”

The St. Matthews Fire District is the descendant of the St. Matthews Fire Association, which was run like a private business. Customers were billed for the firefighting services they needed, Seng said. Since 1984, the services have been provided through property taxes.

The St. Matthews Fire District currently has 17 paid staff members bolstered by 35 volunteers.

June 8, 1995: St. Matthews Fire Protection District, Trustees Meeting: Item 7 of chiefs report:

Marty Kamer retired from over 50 years of service with St. Matthews Fires District. Chair Jim Graven asked Faye Ellerkamp to call Commissioner Steve Henry to request Marty be recognized and commended at a Fiscal Court meeting for hi service as a firefighter.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (June 28, 1995)

June 28, 1995: *Voice-Tribune*, After 58 years, volunteer fireman Marty Kamer retires: Working for 58 years is impressive. Being involved in the same line of work all those years even more amazing. Working for the same place the entire time is almost unheard of.

St. Matthews resident Marty Kamer has done all of the above. Since the age of 19, Kamer has been a volunteer firefighter for the St. Matthews Fire Protection District.

But all good things must come to an end, and so in March, Kamer, 77, laid down his helmet and fire hose, retiring from the department.

“I am not as young as I used to be; 58 years is long enough,” said Kamer, a Kroger store manager for 42 years, the last 22 at the Lexington Road store.

“It was the only hobby I ever had. I didn’t have time to play golf or things like that so I just devoted my spare time to the fire department.”

Since his retirement, Kamer visits the station “now and then,” but has also been driving hearses and limousines for Funeral Auto Co.

As a child, Kamer remembers living next door to Andy Neichter, the then St. Matthews fire chief. “He’s the one who got me involved,” Kamer said.

Kamer said things are a lot different now than when he started.

There was one truck when I first began, and it was housed in a garage on Breckinridge Lane.

“At that time, St. Matthews was the only department in eastern Jefferson County. We went as far as Shelbyville on runs.”

Now, the district has not only more than one truck, but more than one station. Station One, located at 240 Sears Ave., houses two engines (pumpers) and one service truck. Station Two also has two pumpers and a service van. It is located at 440 Brownsboro Road.

The most exciting part of fire-fighting to Kamer is “being able to save lives and property. After all, that’s what it’s all about.”

Kamer said his most memorable experience came in the early 50s. Kamer entered a burning house and saved a 6-year-old girl.

“She was a little blond-headed girl, the same age as my daughter,” Kamer said. “When I brought her out and set her down, I could see my daughter in her.”

Kamer fought fires until 1982, but participated only in inspections until his retirement.

He remained on volunteer status throughout his career, with the exception of four years, 1979-82. During that time, the then-fire chief hired him full time to start a fire prevention program.

While serving as a volunteer fireman, Kamer held the titles of lieutenant, captain, assistant chief and major. During the years he was working with the fire prevention program, he held the title of marshal.

Kamer has received several awards throughout his firefighting career. In the 1950s, he was honored with a plaque honoring him as a lifetime member of the St. Matthews Fire Department. “That was before it even became a fire district,” Kamer said.

In 1982, Kamer received an award for pioneering the professional fire prevention program of the St. Matthews Fire Department.

In 1987, at the 50-year milestone, he received the Outstanding Volunteer Firefighter of the Year award from the Kiwanis Club of St. Matthews and was the subject of a feature story in *The Voice*.

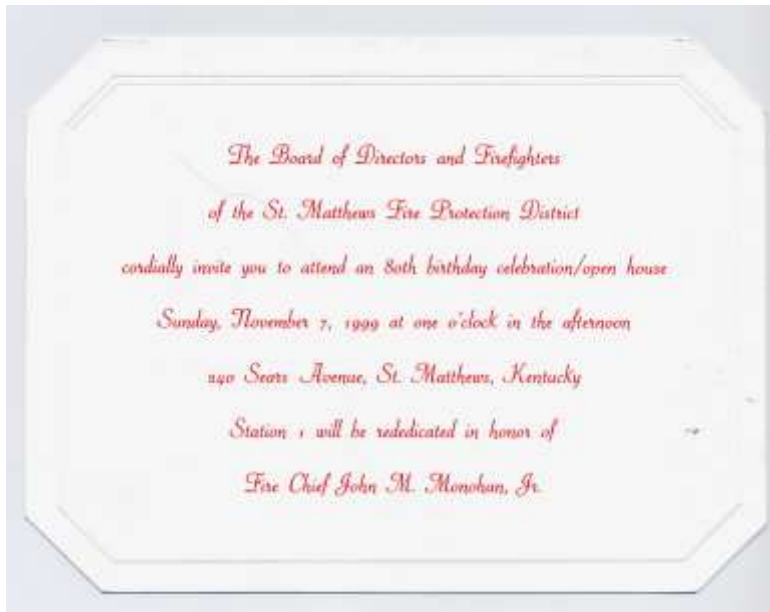
Kamer and his wife Louvinia have five children – Marty Jr., David, Patricia Berry, Janice Nordmann and Mary Margaret Pierce – 15 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

His youngest son David is following in his father’s footsteps and is currently a firefighter at the St. Matthews fire station.



Voice-Tribune staff photo by KRISTEN OCHS
Marty Kamer, who recently retired from the St. Matthews Fire Protection District after 58 years, held a framed copy of the 1987 *Voice* story, of which he was the subject.

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 7, 1999)



Rick Albers, Marty Kamer, Bill Seng



Marty Kamer, Bill Seng



Marty Kamer, Bill Seng



Denny Engnehl, Marty Kamer,
Mike Noon

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 7, 1999/2001)



Marty Kamer



**Marty & son Dave Kamer,
STMFD Reunion**

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (December 30, 2006)

LOUVINIA L. "SIS" KAMER

KAMER, LOUVINIA L. "SIS," 87, of Louisville, passed away Saturday, December 30, 2006 at 12:45 p.m. She was the former Louvinia L. Dietrich, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and was an avid bingo player. She is preceded in death by two sisters, Julia Rush and Delores VanDyne. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Martin A. Kamer Sr.; two sons, Marty Kamer Jr. (Sissy) of Lakeside Park, KY and David Kamer (Tamra) of Louisville; three daughters, Patricia A. Berry (John), Janice Nordmann (John) and Mary Margaret Pierce (David), all of Louisville; sister, Stella Smith; two brothers, Albert Dietrich of Shelbyville and George Dietrich of LaGrange. She also leaves to cherish her memory 15 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren. Her funeral Mass will be celebrated 10:30 a.m. Thursday, at her church, 508 Breckenridge Lane with burial to follow in Louisville Memorial Gardens East. Visitation is 3-8 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, at Ratterman Funeral Home, 3711 Lexington Rd. Expressions of sympathy may be made to WHAS Crusade for Children.

Published in The Courier-Journal from 1/1/2007 - 1/2/2007.

Notice • Guest Book • Funeral home info

Flowers • Gift Shop • Charities

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 23, 2008)

Martin A. Kamer Sr.

KAMER, MARTIN A. SR., 90, of Louisville, passed away Sunday, November 23, 2008. Mr. Kamer managed the old Kroger store in St. Matthews for over 23 years and retired from Kroger after 40 years of employment. He served the St. Matthews community for over 50 years, as a St. Matthews Volunteer Firefighter, Asst. Fire Chief and Fire Inspector. Mr. Kamer drove for Funeral Auto Company after his retirement from Kroger. He was an Army Veteran having served during World War II, a member of the Gruetli Helvetia Society and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. He is preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Louivinia L. Dietrich Kamer. He is survived by two sons, Marty A. Kamer Jr. (Sissy), of Lakeside Park, KY, and David A. Kamer (Tamra) of Louisville; three daughters, Patricia A. Berry (John), Janice M. Nordmann (John) and Mary Margaret Pierce (David), all of Louisville; 15 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren. His funeral Mass will be celebrated noon Wednesday, November 26, 2008, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 508 Breckenridge Lane with burial to follow in Louisville Memorial Gardens East. Visitation will be from 2-8 p.m. Tuesday, and after 9 a.m. Wednesday, Ratterman Funeral Home, 3711 Lexington Road. Expressions of sympathy may be made to the WHAS Crusade for Children.



Just before his death he told his son Dave,

“I’m ready to go see Mom.”

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)

Thank you Papa for...

- Teaching me how to be a good listener (all of the time!).
- For always welcoming us with a smile and saying "I'm fine."
- Instilling in me a good work ethic.
- Not only being my grandfather but for also being my Godfather. What a special privilege!
- Taking me to the firehouse to show me the trucks.
- Being my own hero!
- You prankster! I will never forget the cashew incident. Thanks for the memories!
- For not being afraid to wear lederhosen at the German Dances.
- For showing me that scraps of wood could be turned into amazing things!
- For taking me to school in 3rd grade and helping me with the heavy car door.
- For cherishing Grandma!
- For coming to my baseball games.
- For demonstrating how to live like you're setting an example... and that it's OK to polka now and then.

Thank you Papa for all of these things and all of the rest that will remain with us now and forever. We promise to teach our children and their children.

Mass of Resurrection

*for
Martin A. Kamer Sr.*

Our Lady of Lourdes Church

12:00 p.m.

November 26, 2008



Born to Life February 15, 1918

Married to Louvinia "Sis" Kamer September 2, 1940

Entered Eternal Life November 23, 2008

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)

Entrance Song: Be Not Afraid	Celebrant: Father Bill Miller
First Reading: Eccl. 3:1-11 Melissa Dant - Granddaughter	Deacon: Deacon Tim Ayres
Psalm Response: Shepherd Me, O' God	Organist: Jan Bloemer
Second Reading: Romans 6: 3-9 Nicole Knight - Granddaughter	Cantor: Kaelin Rybak
Gospel Reading: Father Bill Miller	Gift Bearers: Karen Berry - Granddaughter Misty Tudor - Granddaughter
Homily: Father Bill Miller	Communion: Amy Brangers - Granddaughter Sarah Mann - Granddaughter
Prayers of the Faithful: Lord, Hear Our Prayer Sarah Nordmann - Granddaughter	Ministers: Alice Nordmann - niece Richard Donton - family friend
Preparation of Gifts: Amazing Grace	Pall Bearers: Marty Kamer - Grandson Mike Kamer - Grandson Matt Kamer - Grandson John Berry - Grandson Jeff Berry - Grandson Jason Bowlin - Grandson D.J. Kamer - Grandson Ben Pierce - Grandson
Communion Song: I Am the Bread of Life On Eagles Wings	
Remembrance: Marty Kamer Jr.	
Song of Farewell: Old Hundredth	
Recessional: How Great Thou Art	
Burial: Louisville Memorial Gardens East	

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)

MARTY'S FUNERAL SERVICE, by Chief Rick Albers

Although Marty lived to the age of 90, his passing was a very sad and somber occasion. I always regarded him as a community hero because he made a positive difference in a lot of people's lives. He was a true firefighter.

As such, Marty was deserving of the honors due a firefighter and hero. The St. Matthews Fire Protection District went the extra mile to make sure he got them. I am grateful to STMFD for being allowed to take part in those honors.

At Ratterman's Funeral Home, a uniformed firefighter stood as an honor guard by Marty's casket throughout the entire visitation. Marty's white chief officer's helmet and a shadow box containing a gold fire axe and an inscription recognizing his 50th anniversary with the fire department were proudly displayed for all to appreciate. There were many photos of Marty's life, including his firefighting activities, family, friends and especially his late wife Louvinia ("Sis").

Outside, Ratterman's and several neighboring parking lots were full of cars. Inside, the facility was packed with friends offering their condolences and memories of Marty. I expected that this would be the case. It served as a reminder of the significant impact Marty had on the St. Matthews community as well as the Kroger "family" and how much they all appreciated him.

On the afternoon of Marty's funeral, he was transported from Ratterman's to Our Lady of Lourdes Church, on "Old Betsy," the 1931 Seagrave Pumper which was first line apparatus when Marty began his firefighting career. Uniformed firefighters lined the entrance to the church and came to attention when Marty was brought inside for the funeral mass. Firefighters then filed into the church and sat together in a large group. The sea of blue uniforms was a fitting tribute for this hero.

During the service, Marty's son, Martin, Jr., delivered a beautiful and fitting eulogy for his father, citing the many qualities that we all knew in Marty, which evidently carried through in his parenting as well as his community life. Once the service ended, the firefighters filed out and lined the church's exit, standing at attention as Marty was carried outside for his final ride to his place of rest. A long procession made its way through the heart of St. Matthews, via Breckinridge Lane and Westport Road, then through eastern Jefferson County, out Brownsboro Road to Louisville Memorial Gardens East.

At the gravesite, family and firefighters again gathered to bid final farewell to Marty. A few appropriate prayers and scripture were read and everyone joined in saying "Our Father." At that point, Chief Bill Seng signaled the County Fire Dispatcher and the fire radios crackled to life for LAST CALL:

"Radio to St. Matthews Assistant Chief Marty Kamer."

"Radio to St. Matthews Assistant Chief Marty Kamer."

"Radio to St. Matthews Assistant Chief Marty Kamer."

Hearing no response, St. Matthews Fire tones were sounded on all frequencies followed by the final call:

"Attention all companies, this is the final call for retired St. Matthews Assistant Chief Marty Kamer who passed away on November 23, 2008. Chief Kamer served his community as a dedicated member of the St. Matthews Fire Department for more than 50 years. He will be missed. Rest in Peace Sir. WPBI-942, Jefferson County Fire."

This was immediately followed by the sounding of a Q-siren on one of the STMFD vehicles. There was hardly a dry eye in the crowd afterward. It was a fitting farewell to our friend, fellow firefighter and mentor to many. It was also a reminder of the man that Marty was and that his kindness and service to others won't be forgotten.

Marty was then laid to rest alongside his wife "Sis."

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)



Courtesy Chief William "Bill" Seng:

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)



Courtesy Chief William "Bill" Seng:

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)



Courtesy Chief William "Bill" Seng:

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)



Courtesy Chief William "Bill" Seng:

Martin A. Kamer, Sr. (November 26, 2008)



Courtesy Chief William "Bill" Seng:

Martin A. Kamer, Sr., December 2008

Note from Kamer family to the St. Matthews Firefighters:

UNBELIEVABLE, OUTSTANDING AND SINCERELY APPRECIATED!!!

Marty Kamer's entire family is nearly speechless on how to express their thank you to the St. Matthews Fire Department on their tribute to our father and loved one. Everything from the Honor Guard at the Funeral Home, the trip on Betsy, to the Last Call at the Cemetery made this sad occasion a more honored one and reinforced our belief that Marty was one special man.

Oh, how he loved his Fire Department

Thank you to each and everyone for their time and support.

With our deepest appreciation,

The Family of Marty Kamer

Martin A. Kamer, Sr., (Goodbye)

Thank You Marty

**For all the joy you
brought into our lives!!!**