

Town mourns fire chief

BRADFORD - They came by in hundreds yesterday (Tuesday) to pay their respects to a dedicated fire fighter - Harold "Butch" Boyd, Bradford's fire chief, who died Saturday in York County Hospital in Newmarket.

He was 64.

Firefighters from across southern Ontario came to pay a final tribute to the quiet, modest man who was buried in full uniform yesterday at Newmarket Cemetery.

His comrades formed an honor guard after a simple ceremony at the Lathangue and Skwarchuk Funeral Home.

Up until the morning before he died, Butch was preparing for a fire safety campaign involving his pet project: having smoke detectors installed in every home in Bradford.

WORK TO DO

His widow Eileen recalls him telling fellow Bradford firefighter Jim Church Friday, "I've got to go down to the fire hall. There's a lot of work to do."

"Being fire chief was his whole life," said Sherran Breedon, his daughter. "The only time he ever went anywhere - Quebec and Regina - was to a convention as Bradford's fire chief."

Former Fire Chief Ted Gapp remembers Butch as a "real good, dedicated fireman."

He was born in Newmarket, moving to Bradford in 1937 where he opened a butcher shop. He married Eileen in 1942 and moved into the house, coincidentally, directly across from the future fire hall where he would spend so much of his time.

Eileen smiled when she remembered his unorthodox style of buying a home.

"He never even looked inside the place. He just figured that since he was getting married he needed a house."

She fell through the floor as soon as she stepped in for her first look.

36 YEARS SERVICE

Butch joined the fire department in 1943. He was also a charter member of the Bradford Lions Club, although he stopped his activities with the club some time later.

In addition to his profession as butcher, Butch was also a restaurateur, pool hall operator, and manager of the first vacuum plant in Ontario - "a jack-

of-all-trades," according to his daughter.

Butch became fire chief after the retirement of Ted Gapp in 1975.

He was an avid curler and belonged to the curling club up until three years ago.

But his first love was the fire department.

Despite recent hospitalization, he continued to organize his safety campaign, arrange the weekly practice drills, conduct school tours, and when the need arose, supervise firefighting.

He was rushed to York County Friday evening after he developed breathing difficulties. He died the following morning.

Harold Boyd leaves his wife Eileen, daughter Sherran (Mrs. George Breedon) of Bradford, three grandchildren, Laurie, Paul, and Trish, and a brother, Glenn of Scarborough.

Pallbearers were Orville Hand, Bill Breen, Ron Bannerman, Lawrence McKnight, Jim Church and George Allan. Flowerbearers were Ted Gapp, Ken Carter, Roy Storey, Bev Everitt, Gordon Church, and Ted Bulpit.



Butch Boyd