



Russell L. Livengood Jr.
1929 – 2013

Russell L. Livengood Jr. was well known as Fire Chief of the Cumberland Fire Department, a position that he held for 28 years. Total years of service exceeded four decades, thus making him one of the longest serving firefighters in the department's history.

For those who had the pleasure to know Russell Livengood it was obvious that his presence was larger than official positions because he seemed to be everywhere there was a need to be met or a call to be answered. The calls he answered were both spiritual and temporal and he worked tirelessly in support of churches, civic organizations, business organizations, City of Cumberland commissions, the Allegany Museum, and anyone in need of a helping hand. Russell Livengood left a legacy of service that few will equal.

The gentleman was also a source of local historical knowledge that cannot be replaced. Years of public service offered him opportunities to be involved with major events over

Written by: **Dan Whetzel**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

decades of time, and an uncanny memory extended knowledge to his childhood years. The Cumberland flood control project, natural disasters, neighborhood stores, political anecdotes, and sporting events were only a few topics he knew well. It was not uncommon for Mr. Livengood to recount detailed information about past events as if they occurred the prior day. His historical knowledge was frequently relied upon by the author and students in Historical Research Methods class at Allegany High School where he was a regular contributor. Mr. Livengood's delivery of information proceeded in a precise, methodical manner, the same one he employed throughout his professional career.

One quickly noticed there was something special about Russell Livengood. His military bearing, command of facts, and impeccable dress style contributed to an aura that defined the term "class." Discussions with the gentleman were always elevated to a higher plane the longer they continued, an admirable quality.

Russell Livengood did not have to direct others to listen as he spoke, his presence required respect.

As a husband and best friend to Doris, father, public servant, veteran, and volunteer, Mr. Livengood not only commanded respect but also personified dignity. The Cumberland community was made a better place because of the life that he lived.

In recent years he served on the board of directors at the Allegany Museum in downtown Cumberland, where he was instrumental in designing and creating an exhibition on local firefighting history. The Allegany Museum will recognize Russell Livengood's contributions by dedicating the Historic Fire Protection Room in his honor. The Cumberland Mayor, City Council, Fire Department and family members will be represented in the ceremony that will honor the former Fire Chief.

Included in the exhibition are artifacts ranging from 1836 to 1970. The early time period is represented by photographs, banners, and antique firefighting equipment from volunteer organizations that operated in the city. The City of Cumberland's professional fire department was organized

Allegheny Museum's "Russell Livengood Historic Fire Protection Room"

in 1906 and is represented by a variety of equipment and memorabilia that was originally maintained at the old Central Station and other locations throughout the city.

Artifacts have been identified and thoughtfully displayed over the years through the work of Russell and Doris Livengood. Doris is continuing the service legacy that she and Russell enjoyed through 63 years of marriage, by volunteering at the exhibition and other areas of the museum. Doris also enjoys local history and is willing to share the memories with residents and visitors.

The Allegheny Museum is located at 3 Pershing Street in downtown Cumberland. Hours of operation are 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Sunday. Closed Monday. Special tours can be arranged by appointment (301-777-7200).

Also see www.alleghenymuseum.org.



Some of the many artifacts and memorabilia of local fire fighting history at Allegheny Museum: firefighter helmets throughout the years (left), two-man hand pumper (above), water canon (right), antique fire hydrant and fire box (far right).