



GEORGE IRELAND  
FORMER PRESIDENT & HONOURARY LIFE MEMBER - OPFFA

The pursuits, accomplishments and dreams of those who have gone before us, unfortunately fade with time. We hear names from the past and we know that there is some linkage to our Association but our memories are vague and unclear as to who he was or what he had done for the Association. In many instances these representatives forged the bedrock of our collective agreements and constitutions. And, as we know, we take this for granted.

They were truly pioneers who contributed greatly to the ever expanding success of our organization. Brother George Ireland, former President of the OPFFA was one of those inspirational leaders. He was a gentle man, a great man, not given to bombast, but quietly and with great dignity got the job done. He was known as a man with a great sense of humour and very humble. A man who exuded the quality of sincerity of purpose. A man who took the time to sit down and converse with other representatives at every opportunity.

Brother Ireland followed every principle of our former mentor, Dr. Eric G. Taylor. His personal life was also dictated by these standards. Times were tough when Brother Ireland was our leader and the Association was becoming a strong entity and pushing for better wages and benefits. In October of 1972 at an educational seminar held in Niagara Falls, President Ireland had the following to say:

***“Some other facts that I might mention while I am here are that the figure of \$10,000 just a couple of years ago was quite a significant figure when we were talking about salaries, and for the year 1973, the figure of \$12,000 has become significant. There are I believe, twelve locals that have reached this \$12,000 bargain, and several others who are very close to it.”***

Brother George Ireland was a product of the Hamilton local and prior to becoming President of the OPFFA; he served with distinction for an amazing ten consecutive terms as the Vice-President of the fourth district of the OPFFA. For years after his retirement Brother Ireland would make his way to the Ontario Association office and offer up his spare time to assist in any way that he could. His dedication to professional fire fighters, their families, and the progression of the OPFFA never diminished.

Brother George Ireland passed away on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008. He was 87 years old and had retired from the Hamilton Fire Department in 1981 after 35 years of service.

God Bless him, and may he rest in peace.