

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Michael Lee Youngblood**

Currently, the Fire Chief for the City of Richmond, Chief Youngblood reminisces about his move from Georgia to Texas due to the booming economy. He owned his own glass business while serving as a volunteer firefighter for the City of Stafford until a shakeup in the economy. He was hired by the City of Missouri City as a dispatcher and attended fire school. After graduation, he became a full time paid firefighter, police officer, and arson investigator with Missouri City. After 21 years of service, rising to the rank of Assistant Fire Chief, he was hired by the City of Richmond as its Fire Chief.

Mike shares stories of the history of the Richmond Fire Department and how it has grown from the first organized fire department in the county to a modern and well-equipped career department, with 44 highly trained and dedicated personnel. Richmond has the only staffed dive team in the county and other “first” response/rescue training. He also discusses the historic floods of 2016 and 2017, along with the impact on the city and the county.

Mike is detail-oriented, forward thinking and dedicated; attributes that provide him the perfect skills to be the Fire Chief

21 Pages

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Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Phyllis Youngblood – spouse
 Dane Youngblood – son
 Jeremy Youngblood – son
 Dustin Youngblood – son
 Summer Youngblood – daughter
 Michah Youngblood – son
 Mirabeau B. Lamar – President, Republic of Texas
 Kevin Dixon – mentor
 Mike Melton – mentor
 Shayne Carter – Stafford Fire Captain
 Steele Powers – Missouri City Fire Marshal
 Russell Sanders – Missouri City Fire Chief
 Steven Noto – Richmond Fire Chief
 Terri Vela – Richmond City Manager
 Wes Vela – Finance Manager
 Susan Lang – Richmond City Finance Director
 Hilmar Moore – former mayor of Richmond
 Evalyn Moore – current mayor of Richmond
 Albert Cantu – Richmond Fire Marshall
 Dawn Ingle – Richmond fire Admin Assistant
 Laurie Bounds – Richmond Building Official
 Ray Burciaga – Richmond Fire Department EOC
 Milton Wright – FBC Sheriff
 Andy Wilte – Victims Liaison, Missouri City

Places / Businesses

Fire Department, Richmond, Texas
 Atlanta, Georgia
 Macon, Georgia
 Houston, Texas
 Fort Bend County, Texas
 Stafford, Texas
 Missouri City, Texas
 Stafford Volunteer Fire Department
 Lamar County, Georgia
 Wharton Junior College
 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
 Columbia Southern University
 Missouri City Fire Department
 Port Lavaca, Texas
 Richmond Fire Station #1, 200 Houston St., Richmond
 Long Meadow Farms, Richmond
 River West Homeowners Association
 Hutchison Elementary School, Richmond
 Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Richmond
 Emergency Operations Center, Richmond
 Fire Department
 Texas Task Force 1, College Station, Texas
 Fort Bend County Public Works Department
 Brazos River
 Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office

Events

Due to the economy, Mike moved to Houston in 1978 from Georgia. He began his career in the glass industry in Houston and was a volunteer firefighter for the City of Stafford for 20 years.

While working as a dispatcher for the City of Missouri City, he attended fire school and became a full time paid firefighter. Rising to the rank of Assistant Fire Chief after 21 years, Mike retired from Missouri City on Feb 28, 2011 and began work on March 1, 2011 as the Fire Chief for the City of Richmond. He enjoyed 12 hours of retirement.

Mike, along with city management, expanded its fire services, personnel and technology including a new state-of-the-art station in downtown Richmond with additional smaller stations serving communities. More are planned in the near future.

The Fire Chief reminisces about those Chiefs who came before him and the improvements made over the decades since the department was formed in 1897 with volunteers. Today, the department oversees fire operations with 36 full time paid personnel, the Fire Marshal's Office with 5 personnel, the Building Officials Office with 4 personnel, and the Emergency Management Office. He also supervises the Offices of the Fire Marshal and the Building Officials.