

But it is Graham's personality, his inner being, that will be most missed after his retirement. The kind of inner strength that caused him to personally care for his wife, Helen, as they fought the terrible disease of Alzheimer's that ended in her death last year.

Commissioner Graham is the soul of agriculture in this state and was proud of it. North Carolinians will miss him in that office.

They will miss a public servant who never took himself so seriously that he could not reach out and grab a slice of the humor of life—even if the joke was on him.

They will miss a man so genuine that he could tell a newspaper columnist this about his concern for farmers:

"These people are hurting. One fellow wrote me that if we could just pay his light bill, he'd try to get by. That's the situation they're in. I'm worried about 'em."

Can a society ask more of those who call themselves public servant?

Jim Graham has served his state and its people with distinction, with honesty, with hard work, and with honor.

He is a gentleman who is also a gentleman. We thank a Kind Providence that it saw fit to place us on the same Highway of Life of James A. Graham, and allowed us to share that life.

HONORING LIEUTENANT STANLEY
WILLIAM KONESKY, JR. FOR
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE
COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to honor my good friend, Lieutenant Stanley Konesky for the invaluable contributions he has made to the Branford community. On Thursday, December 16, family, friends, and community members gathered to show their appreciation on the occasion of his retirement from the Branford Police Department.

Stan's outstanding level of commitment and dedication to the Branford community throughout his twenty-eight year career has been incredible. He has been a driving force in community awareness and public safety locally and nationally, striving to give our families better neighborhoods in which to raise our children. His work has had an invaluable impact on our community and we are all grateful.

Rising through the ranks of the Branford Police Department, Stan has served the community in several different capacities. During his first years as a patrol officer, Stan administered crime prevention and patrol deployment grants and created and implemented the Student Awareness School Program—a program recognized by the United States Congress as an exemplary nationwide program. As he continued his career, Stan undertook several projects focusing on the prevention of youth violence, directing effective programs for youngsters throughout Branford. He also continued to focus on discovering ways to find more state and federal support for Connecticut police departments. His devotion to ensuring public safety led to implementing several state and federal grants, such as COPS FAST, an

earlier version of the COPS Universal Hiring Program. His efforts have also included the publication of several articles in leading crime prevention magazines as well as instructional books on crime prevention. Somehow, Stan also found time to volunteer his time on several committees throughout the Branford community: The Board of Education Strategic Planning Team, the Branford School Base Health Program, and the Branford Volunteer Service Committee have all benefitted from his service. He has also served as the President of the Walter Camp Football Foundation and has generously given his time as a coach for youth baseball and basketball leagues. His unique spirit and commitment are reflected in the 10 medals of commendation, 330 letters of appreciation and recognition from the public, a myriad of community service awards, and a US Congressional Recognition Award. Words alone cannot adequately convey just what Stan has been to the Branford community.

Stan's dedication and generosity has truly enriched the Branford community. His diligence and extraordinary hard work has given police departments across the country and many youngsters access to the necessary support to ensure the safety of our communities, our families, and our children. I have had the opportunity to work with Stan on several different projects and the enthusiasm and excitement he has shown is amazing. I would like to extend my personal thanks to him for all the assistance he has given me over the years. For his many contributions, whether professional or volunteer, I rise today to join his family, friends and colleagues in congratulating Lieutenant Stanley Konesky on his retirement from the Branford Police Department. I extend my deepest appreciation and very best wishes as he begins a new career and seeks new goals to achieve.

HONORING RAY CHAMPINE FROM
MARTIN, TN

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ray Champine, a longtime Postal Service Letter Carrier in Martin, TN, who, with no regard for his own safety, entered the burning home of an elderly customer in order to rescue him. While on his route, Mr. Champine was alerted by a smoke alarm and smoke emitting from the eaves of a house that there was a problem. After asking a neighbor to call the fire department, he bravely entered the house and crawled through the thick, black smoke until he found the elderly man near his bed in the back of the house. Although surrounded by the encompassing smoke and struggling to breathe, Mr. Champine dragged the man away from the fire in order to remove him to safety outside the burning home. He smashed through a window hoping it was the backdoor and local rescuers heard the breaking glass and knocked down the door closest to the broken window. Martin Fire Captain Dickie Hart and Police Captain Don Teal were able to bring both men to safety. Martin Director of Public Safety, J.D. Sanders, praised Mr. Champine and other rescuers, saying, "If they hadn't shown up when they did, both men

would probably have died at the back door. As it is, Mr. Champine without a doubt, is a hero."

Mr. Speaker, I also include an article about this heroic deed for the RECORD.

[Volunteer Voices, Feb. 2000]

"... WITHOUT A DOUBT A HERO"—MARTIN
CARRIER RISKS LIFE TO SAVE CUSTOMER

Imagine standing in front of a burning building, knowing there's someone inside, and knowing that unless you do something to help, that person is probably going to die.

That's the exact situation Martin, TN City Carrier Ray Champine found himself facing on December 7 of last year. But what he did would definitely fall into the category of "above and beyond the call."

Champine was making his normal deliveries on Oxford Street. He had just put the mail in the box when he heard a high pitched whine.

"I was almost sure it was a smoke alarm, but I couldn't tell where it was coming from," said Champine. "So I went back to the previous house to see if it was coming from there."

As Champine approached Golsby Gatewood's home, he saw a wisp of smoke coming from under the eaves of the house.

"I asked the next-door neighbors to call the fire department, but I knew Mr. Gatewood wasn't real mobile, so I decided to try to help him," said Champine.

After repeatedly calling to Gatewood, Champine finally heard him respond. The front door was unlocked and smoke was beginning to fill the room.

"It was already pitch black inside the house, so I kept calling for Mr. Gatewood," said Champine. "I finally found him near his bed in the back of the house and I tried to help him out the fastest way I could by dragging him out of the building."

But by that time, the fire had spread through the front of the home, blocking the front door. Champine dragged Gatewood to the back of the house then tried to escape by breaking what he thought was the window of the side door.

"The smoke was so thick I didn't realize I was breaking a window that was a few feet from the door," Champine. "If I had known that, I would have just reached out and opened it."

Rescuers who had just arrived on the scene, heard the breaking glass and Martin Fire Capt. Dickie Hart and Police Capt. Don Teal knocked down the door.

Martin Director of Public Safety J.D. Sanders praised Champine's heroic action.

"If Dickie and Don hadn't shown up when they did, both of the men probably would have died right there by that back door. As it is, Mr. Champine is without a doubt, a hero. Without him, there's no question that Mr. Gatewood wouldn't have made it."

Officers on the scene reported that the smoke was so thick in the building that only Gatewood could be seen when the door was opened, even though Champine was standing next to the elderly gentleman.

Champine suffered a cut on his hand from breaking the window, and sustained burns to his face, ears and eyes. He was hospitalized for several days following the incident for severe smoke inhalation.

Postmaster Glenn Shegog added her voice to those who praised Champine.

"Ray is an outstanding employee and a great co-worker and we're all thankful that he's on the road to recovery," said Shegog.

After all is said and done, Champine's only request was a simple one. "I'd really like to find my cap," said Champine. "I lost it somewhere in the house and I'd really like to have it back."