



## Norbert John Scanlan

June 6, 1931 - January 1, 2010

### Scanlan

El Paso, Texas District Fire Chief John Scanlan was quoted in a 1967 newspaper article as saying, "...his greatest goal in life is to see that his children are properly raised and educated to face life as good American citizens." Chief Scanlan accomplished that, and so much more.

Norbert John Scanlan was born in 1931 to Beulah Nunn Scanlan and Merlin Scanlan. At the age of 14 he quit school to work full time to support his mother and four siblings and later worked to help his father, in addition to working as a firefighter. In 1950, he married Helen Dyer. The two raised their family in El Paso. He obtained his GED and later earned two years of college certification in advanced firefighting.

In 1949 he became a firefighter for the El Paso Fire Department and joined fire station No. 11, a single engine company station. From there he studied hard and progressed up the ladder. He served station No. 5 for 15 years, becoming a driver at four years service, lieutenant at seven years service, and captain at 10 years service. After 28 years and 7 months, he retired from station No. 7 as District Chief in 1977.

Chief Scanlan loved his job and his firefighting ethic was -- first one in, last one out. He worked 25 years without taking one sick day. More than 20 years after he retired, in an annual Fire Department book Chief Scanlan was acknowledged for his outstanding service where he was dubbed "Last of the

Iron Men."

He was also quoted as saying, "... in this job you soon learn you are part of a team that's pulling for the benefit of not only your fellow citizens, but for all mankind. For there are firefighters and other public servants the world over. And to me it has become a challenge to master the varied requirements of being a top-notch fireman."

Besides fighting fires, he was a real outdoorsman with hunting being his favorite hobby. Other past times include telling firefighting stories, cooking, reading and completing the newspaper's daily crossword puzzle. A fair and practical man, Chief Scanlan worked hard his entire life. He approached life with a can do, positive attitude. His motto in life and death was, "Let's get it done."

Chief Scanlan passed away peacefully in his home in Spring Branch, Texas on January 1, 2010, at 1:15 a.m. He was attended by his wife and daughters. He was 78 years old. Chief Scanlan battled non-Hodgkins lymphoma for 10 years a cancer common among firefighters and died of complications as a direct result.

He is survived by: his wife of 59 years, Helen D. Scanlan and their daughters: Rose Cavazos, Jessica Alvarez, Jodie Helm, and Nikki Medinger; grandchildren: Evelyn Band, Mason Cavazos, Amanda Alvarez, Alex Alvarez, John Carey, JoAnne Carey, Trevor Medinger, and Alexa Medinger; and great-granddaughter, Samantha Band. He is also survived by his brothers Merlin Scanlan, Ronald Scanlan, and sisters Rose Ann Spudeck, Mary Ann Grasso, Patricia Ortega, Betty Ann Scanlan and Veda Marie Hamilton.

A private burial was held on Friday, January 8, 2010 with Fire Department Honors and was attended by his wife, daughters and their families. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking for donations to be made to the American Cancer Society.

# Tribute Wall

GG

“ *Norbert Nunn Scanlan Johnny was my brother-in-law for nearly sixty years, having married my baby sister Helen Dyer on the 20th of February, 1950. For approximately 50 years, we all lived in El Paso and raised our families. My husband Lelo, daughter Betty*

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**Glendora Gardea** - February 13, 2010 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ *My brother Norbert was the most admirable man I will ever know, he is a legend as big as John Wayn,s image, bigger than life , his memory and life and huting stories will continue generation from now. He was always the one to depend on , to do the right*

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**Ron Scanlan** - February 01, 2010 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ *My heart and prayers are with you Aunt Helen and your loving family. As a child I remember Uncle Nobby and hearing his firefighter stories. As an adult I still enjoyed listening to him even if I heard the story the second or third time. He was not only a*

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**Rose L. Scanlan** - January 26, 2010 at 12:00 AM