



Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

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CT Fire Academy Names Instructors of the Year

The Connecticut Fire Academy has named two fire service veterans as the first recipients of its Instructor of the Year Award.

Joseph McElroy and Robert D. Andrew received the award, which celebrates excellence in fire service education, recognizing instructors who demonstrate exceptional dedication and a steadfast commitment to training and inspiring the next generation of firefighters.

“We are pleased to recognize our first two recipients of the Instructor of the Year Award. Joe McElroy and Robert Andrew exemplify the core values of ethical conduct, professional dedication, and a commitment to a student-centered approach to education,” said Paul Norwood, Director of Training at the Connecticut Fire Academy. “Their achievements underscore the importance of excellence in firefighter education and the vital role instructors play in shaping a safer, more prepared firefighting community. The CT Fire Academy congratulates Joe McElroy and Robert Andrew for their outstanding service and dedication to the profession.”

Mr. McElroy and Mr. Andrew were chosen as recipients of the Instructor of the Year Award through a comprehensive evaluation process, emphasizing their exceptional contributions across ten key criteria. These include exemplary leadership, innovative teaching methods, and a significant positive impact on student success. Nominated by their peers, both men exemplified the core values of ethical conduct, professional dedication, and a commitment to a student-centered approach to education.

In recognition of their achievements, they will each receive a scholarship to attend the Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis. This scholarship covers airfare, hotel accommodations, and a full conference pass, granting them access to hands-on training sessions and workshops designed to further enhance their skills and expertise.

Mr. McElroy serves as the Recruit Program Coordinator for the Connecticut Fire Academy, a role he has held since 2001. McElroy began his instructional career in 1995 as a Fire Service Instructor with the Litchfield County Regional Fire School, demonstrating a commitment to training and education that has spanned nearly three decades.

Mr. McElroy is a retired Shift Commander for the City of Torrington, where he dedicated 26 years of service to protecting the community and mentoring firefighters. In addition to his municipal service, he was an active member of the Connecticut Wildland Fire Crew, highlighting his versatility and dedication to fire suppression in diverse environments. He also serves as the Commissioner of Public Safety in Torrington.

Mr. Andrew has dedicated over six decades to fire service, leadership, and training, beginning his career with Eagle Hose Co. No. 2 of the Guilford Volunteer Fire Department in 1963. Rising through the ranks, he served as Lieutenant, Captain, Deputy Chief, and Chief of Department (1981-1984). His leadership extended beyond Guilford, where he represented the town as the first President of the South-Central Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Council and as a President of the Valley Shore Mutual Aid Association.

Andrew's contributions include chairing the 125th anniversary committee of the Guilford Volunteer Fire Department and addressing critical safety needs as Training Coordinator for the Branford Volunteer Fire Department following

the Line of Duty Death of Edward Francis Ramos. Mr. Andrew joined the Connecticut Fire Academy as an adjunct instructor in 1995.

For more information, contact Rick Green, Director of Communications, at 860-539-0159 or richard.green@ct.gov.

Mr. McElroy is at left below. Mr. Andrew is at right.

