

Donald Wayne King, T-56

29 November 1937 – 25 August 1980

(aged 42)



Donald Wayne King, 42, a Memphis fireman who had been in a coma for 15 years after being overcome by toxic fumes during a 1965 fire, died yesterday at Baptist Hospital. A spokesman for Bright Gladd Convalescent Center, where King had been a patient since 1967, said the former fireman was admitted to the hospital Friday "after a turn for the worse." Mr. King was 27 when, on March 31, 1965, a two-alarm fire at the Owen Graham Sundry Store at 1333 Madison resulted in the death of fireman Roger W. Fitch, 35, and injuries to King and three other fire fighters. The three others were not seriously injured. King and Fitch were among several firemen, who, upon arriving at the scene, went in to check for casualties and ventilate the building. All were wearing gas masks. Firemen said King ran into the building with his mask on, held a hose line a few seconds, apparently felt something going wrong, and tried to escape. He collapsed as he started out and never regained consciousness. King joined the Fire Department March 6, 1961. He leaves his wife, Mrs. Barbara King, his mother, Mrs. Merle King of Memphis and a sister Mrs. Gloria Davidson in Iowa Falls, Iowa.

Information from The Commercial Appeal, Tuesday, August 26, 1980.