

Sgt. Brown...from Page 1A



Firefighter Robby Brown answered his last call aboard Hall County Fire Engine 11 on Wednesday, Sept. 16.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

“Kind” to everyone he came across, from scenes of tragedy to everyday encounters.

And Reed said he will forever cherish the last words of his friend, with whom he spent a few final moments the week before he died.

“I was up at his house and was getting ready to leave, and I hugged his neck, told him I loved him,” Reed said. “The last words he spoke to me, he said, ‘I love you too, Bobby’ ... Robby had a true love for others and was just a remarkable guy.”

Also eulogizing Brown was his brother-in-law Lee Epps, who said that Brown – a true family man – had become a full-on brother to him over the years. And Epps made it clear that the man he called brother was a brother to many others as well.

“He was honest, he was respectful, and he was a giving person,” Epps said. “He loved being a fireman, but most of all, he loved the brotherhood.”

According to Epps, Brown’s fellow Hall County firefighters made the drive up the mountain every Monday and Tuesday for the last weeks of his life to help around the house, making sure to ask his wife Dietrich if there was anything she needed while they were there.

“(Brotherhood) is knowing that one phone call can solve just about any problem,”

Epps said. “It’s knowing that someone always has your back. It’s knowing that they hurt when you hurt ... It’s in your heart and it’s in your soul.”

Added Epps, “We will miss this husband, this father, this brother, ‘Fire Pops,’ and friend. We will mourn the man who is gone, who we lost tragically. But we will remember above all that he wanted us to remember him as he lived – thoughtful, kind, giving, honest, and having a large heart.”

Officiating the service was family friend Mark Alexander, whose mother Sandy performed some of the special music for the occasion. Alexander focused many of his remarks on Brown’s willingness to help those in need and his belief in eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.

Likening Brown to the Biblical brothers Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, whose faith helped them escape the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander said that Brown’s faith in Jesus saved him from a fiery fate also.

Following the service, the man known as “Fire Pops” to his eight grandchildren was escorted by Hall County firefighters aboard his own Fire Engine 11, signifying Brown’s last call as a firefighter on his way to his final resting place at Meadow View Cemetery.

The Union County

Sheriff’s Office led the procession, which featured four Hall County fire apparatus plus ambulance, eight Union County fire apparatus, one Forsyth County fire apparatus, and dozens of community members, with Union County Ladder 1 stationed with an American flag raised high at the Skeenah Gap Road turnoff.

At the cemetery, Brown’s fellow first responders honored his more than three decades of service by holding “Tolling of the Bell” and “Last Call” graveside ceremonies, the former being an age-old tradition for firemen, the latter a more modern acknowledgment of an emergency worker’s end of watch.

Hall County Fire presented Brown’s son Brandon with his fire helmet and gave his badge to Dietrich after performing last call rituals for the devoted firefighter.

Brown’s nephew Brent Long was one of many family members attending his funeral, and he said his uncle played an important role in his own decision to become a first responder.

Long is currently a lieutenant with the Union County Fire Department and serving as deputy director of the local Emergency Management Agency.

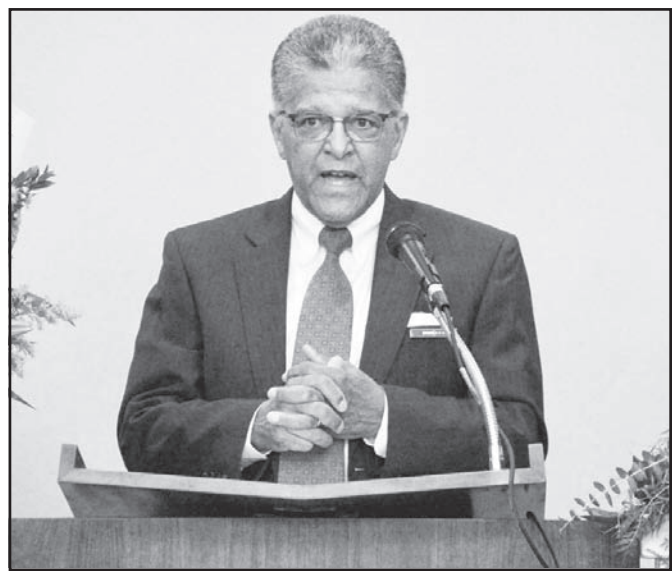
“Knowing that he had a stable career and was helping people really had an impact on

me joining the fire service,” Long said. “That was what really hit the nail on the head for me, was seeing Robby help the citizens of Hall County, and knowing that I wanted to do that for the citizens of Union County as well.”

Surviving Brown are his loving wife Dietrich Brown of Blairsville; children Brandon and Jenny Brown of Woodstock, Charlie and Alex DeRuiter of Fayetteville, Caleb and Lisa Dyer of Beaverton, Oregon, Chandler Dyer of Blairsville, and Canaan Dyer of Blairsville.

Also surviving brown are sisters and brothers-in-law Lynda Keener of Warne, North Carolina, Kathy and Charlie Ross of Blairsville, Phyllis Carey of Blairsville, Denise and Charles Long of Blairsville, Cindy Moore of Blairsville; and grandchildren Alexander, Blythe, Andrew, Juliette, Calvin, Sadie, Elliott, and Robert Calen.

“Robby’s (fire) service and quiet selflessness still rings in the ears of all those who



Lee Epps offered a heartfelt eulogy for his brother-in-law Robby Brown during his Sept. 16 funeral service.
Photo by Shawn Jarrard

knew him, the impact of his kind heart living on in the countless lives he touched,” his obituary reads. “From 32 years of service in the Hall County Fire Department to a lifetime of love of those around him, the world is a better place because

he was here. “When he wasn’t driving Engine 11, he was spending time with family and friends, gardening, driving his tractor, building things, and canning with his wife.”

Union County Retired Educators September Meeting



UCREA President Rick Maddox attended the District meeting with other Area presidents.

Union County Retired Educators met via “Zoom” at 11 a.m. on September 9th. President Rick Maddox conducted the meeting with approximately a dozen members online. Our program was learning to use the Zoom application and applying it in order to get us all online!

Business included the treasurer’s report, various committee reports, discussion about

future fund raising, our membership, and upcoming events. President Maddox had attended the District Meeting on August 20 in Clarkesville where changes in the requirements for the Unit of Excellence Award (due to Covid-19) were discussed, and he shared those changes.

Our next meeting will be on October 14th via “Zoom” at 11 a.m. We will be discussing “Georgia Retired Educa- tors Day” which is November 1st and also the possibility of meeting in November. All members are encouraged to join the meeting and spend some time with peers. The Union County Retired Educators Association is an affiliate of the Georgia Retired Educators Association and all retired educators and family members are invited to join this local unit. NSep23.Z12/CA

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