

GARDEN GROVE FIRE CHIEF TOM SCHULTZ



Garden Grove Fire Chief Tom Schultz was born on April 30, 1964 at DeWitt Army Hospital in Fort Belvoir, VA. Married to his high-school sweetheart, Kim, for more than 30 years, they have two daughters, Sarah and Melissa, and a son, Andrew.

Chief Schultz began his fire career at the age of 21 as a fire prevention specialist with the Fullerton Fire Department. He soon became a firefighter and a firefighter paramedic, which ascended him to captain status. After 20 years with the department, he became the Training and Disaster Preparedness Officer, responsible for the department's overall professional fire training and for updating and implementing the citywide disaster preparedness program.

In 2007, he was promoted to Shift Battalion Chief, overseeing the daily activities of the department, including obtaining and managing grant funding, and directing the department's Urban Search and Rescue program.

In 2011, while serving as Deputy Chief of Operations, the Fullerton and Brea Fire Departments consolidated their command staff and placed Tom at the helm of facilitating the management integration of both departments. He also worked extensively with both Fullerton and Brea labor groups, authored new policies and developed several new programs, and served as acting Fire Chief.

On April 29, 2015, following a 30-year career with the Fullerton Fire Department, Tom became Garden Grove's 13th Fire Chief. His arrival to Garden Grove was pivotal in helping the fire department overcome a crucial period, during which he worked closely with fire management and provided the leadership needed to re-focus the department.

Under the leadership of Chief Schultz, the Garden Grove Fire Department achieved several milestones, including the development of: the Garden Grove Unified School District Inspection Program; the Grove District – Anaheim Resort Hotel Inspection Program; the Tactical Emergency Medical Services Program (SWAT medics); the new Light Air Unit; the Public Information program; and the opening of the new Fire Station No. 6.

On Friday, September 14, 2018, Fire Chief Tom Schultz retired from the Garden Grove Fire Department. At the request of Garden Grove City Manager Scott Stiles, he continued to serve as an annuitant fire chief.

On Sunday, January 27, 2019, with his family by his side, Chief Tom Schultz passed away from stage 4 pancreatic cancer at St. Jude Medical Center, at the age of 54.

Since 1986, Tom had been an instructor at Santa Ana College, training college students and academy recruits in fire technology. He was very active in regional committees and was the past president of both the Orange County Fire Chiefs Training Officers and Operations Sections groups and chaired the committee that developed the county's Active Shooter Policy, now being used by all Orange County fire departments.

He held an Associate's Degree in Public Fire Service from Santa Ana College, and a Bachelor's Degree in Applied Sciences from Brandman University.