

Gus Werhan – Asheville – 1963

From [Facebook, December 9, 2021](#)

On December 6, 1963, Asheville firefighter Charles Augustus "Gus" Werhan, 25, died of asphyxiation after being pinned by a collapsed floor at a fire at the Susquehanna Antique Company at 23 Biltmore Avenue. He was pronounced dead on arrival at Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville. Werhan was buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery on December 11, 1963. See news story below.

Fireman Is Killed in Blaze

ASHEVILLE (AP)—One fireman was killed and another was injured Monday when fire destroyed a two-story brick midtown furniture and antique store.

The victim was identified as Charles A. Werhan, 25, a member of the Asheville Fire Department for three years. Firemen said Werhan was found under a piano after the second story of the old building collapsed. He was trapped for more than an hour.

Another fireman, R. H. Lance Jr., 29, suffered a cut on the back of his head when he tripped over a hose when the floor fell in.

More than 50 firemen fought the blaze for two and a half hours before it was brought under control.

Nat Frideman, operator of the Susquehanna Furniture and Antique Store, estimated an inventory loss of \$50,000. There was no immediate estimate of losses by the owners of the building.

Firemen and a physician administered oxygen to Werhan and worked over him for more than an hour before his body was removed from the building.

Friedman said he saw smoke coming from the basement about 3:30 p.m. As he rushed to

summon firemen, he said he heard what apparently was a blast coming from the furnace.

Winston-Salem Journal
Dec 10, 1963