

# Remembering

## William Gray Parsons

### Millers Creek Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Volunteer Engineer

Date of Death: February 1, 2009

Age: 58

William Gray Parsons was born on August 22, 1950, to Albert Turner and Ruby Dequasia Parsons. He was taken from his family, community, and the fire department while doing what he loved more than anything—helping people in need.

Gray graduated from West Wilkes High School in 1968. He worked with the North Carolina Department of Corrections for 18 years and was very involved as a member of the Prison Emergency Response Team (PERT). He married me, Lorinda Triplett, on April 23, 1979. We had two children, Nicholas and April, and Gray had a daughter, Susan, from a previous marriage.

Gray loved the holidays. As our children were growing up, he would come through the door “ho, ho, ho-ing”—to send our peeking daughter back to bed while gifts were being put under the tree—or cover the hole in our son’s door with wrapping paper covered in small, green Christmas trees. In later years, Gray also treasured decorating the Christmas tree with Susan, whom he hadn’t seen in many years, as she was raised by her mother in Florida. He also enjoyed riding in the county Christmas parade on the Forest Service float alongside Smokey the Bear.

My husband loved bluegrass music and bagpipes, especially Amazing Grace. While April was in high school,

Gray was very involved with the marching band, hauling and setting up equipment during football games and out-of-town exhibitions. He was very proud of Nicholas as he completed basic training for the United States Marine Corps.

Gray enjoyed working on his “Tonka Truck,” an old fire truck that he was restoring. I would take him sandwiches and coffee while he was hard at work. When I participated with a local theater group, Gray ran lines with me and helped backstage with props. Gray and I also visited with his longtime friend who was battling cancer, and Gray helped with yard work around his home.

Whenever his pager went off, Gray would “fly up” and out the door, many times stumbling around searching for his boots. I used to tell him, “If you slow down, you would get there faster.” When he ran out the door, I never knew when he would come back. He would tear out of the driveway, gravel flying and dust billowing, as he made his way to wherever he was needed.

Gray left behind a loving wife and children, four grandchildren—one of whom is named for him—and extended family, all of whom miss him greatly.

*“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13*

