



Remembering



Colin Gene Thomas

Verona Volunteer Fire Department — North Carolina

Volunteer 2nd Assistant Chief

Date of Death: June 14, 2008

Age: 51

Gene Thomas would best be described as a silent servant. Gene was a man of little words and big actions. He presented with a shy and calm demeanor, but all you had to do was ask and Gene would unselfishly help you until the end.

Born on January 3, 1957, to Kenneth and Geraldine Thomas, Gene was the second of three children. He was raised with his older brother, Wayne, and younger brother, Toby, in Verona, the quaint community they call home. Gene never missed a day of school, receiving a perfect attendance award every year, and graduated from Dixon High School in 1975. Gene went to work in the auto body shop at Sanders Ford shortly after high school and worked there for 23 years. In 1999, Gene went to work for the North Carolina Department of Transportation and worked there until the time of his death.

On July 3, 1995, after many years of dating, Gene and his wife, Nancy, were married. Gene and Nancy spent all their free time together, and it was rare to see one without the other. They attended the Verona United Methodist Church. Gene was a collector of Coca-Cola bottles, NASCAR memorabilia, road signs and antique



tins. He also enjoyed woodworking, and all projects were completed with superior craftsmanship.

The fire service spans four generations of the Thomas family, and Gene took pride in carrying on the family tradition. He joined the Verona Volunteer Fire Department in 1975. During his time with the department, he held the ranks of lieutenant and captain before becoming 2nd assistant chief. No one can question Gene's tireless dedication to the Verona Volunteer Fire Department. Whether emergency calls, training, business meetings, or work days, Gene was usually the first one at the station and one of the last to leave. If something was broken, Gene was going to fix it no matter how late it meant he had to stay.

Gene answered his last call to duty in the early morning hours of June 14, 2008. The Verona Volunteer Fire Department was on the scene of multiple vehicle accidents, in near zero visibility resulting from heavy fog and dense smoke from a nearby woods fire. While searching for a female who cried out for help, Gene and an Onslow County sheriff's deputy were struck by a tractor-trailer. Gene died at the scene, doing what he had loved for so many years: serving and protecting his community.