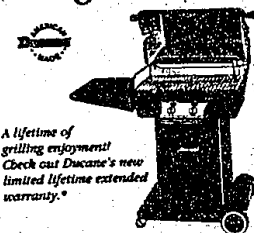


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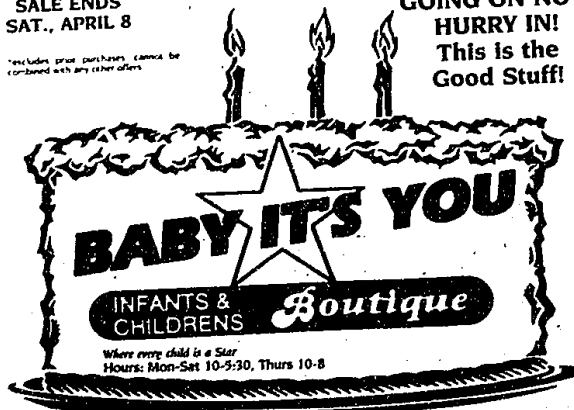
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Top Hills firefighter: Richard Cray, 49, has been involved in public-safety work since age 18.

## Hills' firefighter of year practices what he teaches

BY BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

If experience is the best teacher, then maybe Richard Cray should know how to teach others CPR and fire prevention.

Cray, 49, was named Farmington Hills Firefighter of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars during ceremonies last month.

Cray, who has his own investigations business, was given the honor for the second time. He first received the award in 1983.

Cray, who is married and has two children, has lived in Farmington Hills for all but three years, when as a Detroit police officer he was required to live there.

And in 1972, when he left police work, he tried semi-truck driving and the building trades for a time. But police, fire and investigations have been his life.

"It wasn't for me," he said of his other jobs. "I wanted to get back into this kind of work."

And as an investigator of fires, insurance fraud and internal business theft and fraud, Cray works in a field for which his police work in Farmington and Detroit have trained him.

"I got to know a lot of people when I worked in public safety," he said.

Cray joined the Farmington re-

**Richard Cray, who has his own investigations business, was given the honor for the second time. He first received the award in 1983.**

serve program at 18 and has been involved in public safety work since. A lieutenant at Station 1, Cray has earned citations and life-saving awards. In 1993 Cray stopped a moving vehicle at the scene of an accident to earn a certificate and won the VFW Firefighter of the Year award in 1983 for rescuing a woman trapped in an apartment fire.

"I'm always looking for a chance to teach," he said, adding that taking part in a pilot program at Power Middle School to teach CPR to youngsters gave him a great deal of satisfaction.

Cray's resume is a testament to training and education. He has attended the Detroit Police Academy, Mercy College of Detroit, Madonna University in Livonia, United States Air Force Tech School, the National Fire Academy, the Macomb County Fire Training Institute, the Oakland

Fire Training Institute and Eastern Michigan University to receive training in fire and arson investigation.

Cray has taught at the Oakland Fire Training Institute and teaches in the Farmington Hills department. His teaching has contributed to the large number of recruits who have stayed with the department or moved on to other departments.

And if an active firefighting career and investigation business weren't enough, Cray also keeps his hand in law enforcement, in Benona Township. The township, with a population of 1,100, is half way between Ludington and Muskegon. Cray serves as chief of police during the busy summer tourist season for part of the week, and loves it.

"It takes a fair bit of time away from firefighting, but it's something I enjoy that's worthwhile," he said.

Cray is a certified police officer, fire training instructor, emergency medical technician, fire fighter, fire officer and American Red Cross CPR and first aid instructor. With the exception of the three years in Detroit, Cray has been a Farmington Hills resident since 1955.

## Awards committee selects Hills firefighters for honors

Several Farmington Hills firefighters were honored by the department after being selected for their achievements by the department's awards committee.

The committee members are Inspector Denny Hughes, firefighter Tom Mitchell, Lt. Lee Panoushek, Sgt. Jim Cheyne and firefighter Ron Sill. Four of the five are former VFW/Optimist Fire Fighter of the Year winners.

The award winners were:  
■ Lt. Richard Cray, Sgt. Dave Chrisko, and firefighters Dave Moriarty, Scott Gardner, Rick Miller, Mike Crawford, Community EMC paramedics Linda Donikian and Mike Kotulak and

**The committee members are Inspector Denny Hughes, firefighter Tom Mitchell, Lt. Lee Panoushek, Sgt. Jim Cheyne and firefighter Ron Sill. Four of the five are former VFW/Optimist Fire Fighter of the Year winners.**

Hills police officer Mike Fluhart received unit citations for their efforts to help a man in cardiac arrest.

■ Carolyn Babcock, an employee of Bill Knapp's restaurant at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake, received a civilian citation for successfully dislodging food from a choking

person at the restaurant by using abdominal thrusts.

■ Firefighters Lt. Lee Panoushek, Sgt. Ken Block, Ben Vaughan, Bob Larkins, Mark Borman, Scott Legas, John Kastran, and CEMS paramedics Dan Preszowski and Shannon Leary were given unit citations for their actions in a personal injury accident in which a pedestrian was hit by a vehicle.

■ Lt. Richard Cray, Sgt. Dave Chrisko, firefighters Tom Mitchell and Dave Moriarty, and CEMS paramedics Paul Novicki and Sherry Jones were given lifesaving awards.

■ Lt. Dennis Atkins, Sgt. Greg Glowacki, and firefighters Norbert Keppanen, Mike Crawford and Jim Eskin were awarded unit citations for their direct care of a cardiac arrest victim.

Sgt. Greg Glowacki and firefighter Dave Moriarty were given lifesaving awards.

■ District Chief Joe Schornack, Lt. Dennis Atkins and firefighter Max Antebard were given unit citations for aiding a woman having trouble breathing who went into respiratory arrest.

■ Sharonne Douchette was awarded a unit citation for her assistance in giving emergency care in a personal injury accident.

■ Firefighter John Dredson was given a meritorious service award for his involvement in investigating and fabricating at no cost to the department, a number of tools and projects for the department.



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