

Mayhew 1

00:00:06 **Amy Mauro**

My name is Amy Mauro I'm Executive Director of the DC Fire & EMS Foundation. We are here today. I always forget the date at this point.

00:00:17 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Friday the 13th.

00:00:19 **Amy Mauro**

Oh, nice! We're here on Friday, September 13th at the home of Donald Mayhew, senior or elder, to talk about the Mayhew family in the DC Fire and EMS Department. And so I'll ask each of you to introduce yourself first and tell us, what years you served with the DC Fire Department.

00:00:45 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And I'll start. I am Donald McLean. Mayhew. And I was appointed to the DC Fire Department in 1959, and I retired in 1979.

00:01:02 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

And I'm Donald Neil Mayhew, and I was appointed in 1991 and retired in 2020.

00:01:12 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Matthew Kane Mayhew. I came on in 2017 appointed to Engine 10. I'm still there. Active.

00:01:20 **Amy Mauro**

Okay, great. So your family has an incredible history with the DC Fire Department. I thought we could walk through your different family members. And when they served and sort of family conversation about what you know about them. And then we can talk about your own careers and I usually have a set of standard questions. But don't feel like we have a script, and you can contribute as much information as you'd like. So why don't we start with you?

00:01:54 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

The first. I think we should obviously start with Simon Aloysius McLean. He's my grandfather and my mother's daddy. And I thought I knew that he had been at Engine 14. At some point. I had heard - everything that I know, by the way, is from my mother, his daughter, or his wife, Nellie Kelly McLean. I just love that name. Nellie Kelly. Anyway, that's the only thing. And that's all that I have to offer. Which is okay. And I thought that, when I was a sergeant, I was detailed to Engine 14 one day and I knew that Simon had been there. So I found the old closet where they have all the old journals, or at least they used to do. They still have the old journals?

00:02:46 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yes, sir. Depends on where you go.

00:02:48 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Anyway, so I looked him up and I thought that I read - I saw his name. He had left on Christmas Day. What I thought was 1888 and later ... He signed out at noon on Christmas Day of 1888, and he signed back in from Christmas leave at 6 p.m.. He had six hours Christmas leave that year. And I was telling Jimmy Embrey this, he said, no, that can't be done. He convinced me that it must have been 1898 because 14 wasn't in service, according to Jimmy [in 1888]. So now I'm correcting this. I was a sergeant and I saw him on Christmas Day of 1898. And that would have been six years before he was ... Like a Lieutenant - Foreman.

00:04:07 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And then, the next thing I knew was that the Baltimore fire came, and my mother told me. This is the stuff you want to know, I think. They lived at - He was assigned to 14. And by the way, that Christmas leave he got meant that he had to go from downtown, which is where 14 was in those days - I don't know why, but it was down there - and walk a streetcar or something because he certainly didn't have a car. To 1108 Florida Avenue Northeast. You know where that is? That's where the family lived. And then get back there in this six hour leave. So anyway, when Baltimore asked for help in 1904 for the fire, he was, of course, called to go do that. And my mother told me that they walked from 1108 Florida Avenue down to the Eckington Yards, which was probably half a mile. That's not far. Maybe for half a mile. Well, whatever it is, a mile. They walked from the 1100th block of Florida Avenue to Eckington Yards. And there they - firefighters, firemen, they didn't say firefighters. Firemen were loading horses and apparatus horses into boxcars, of course. And the apparatus was strapped down into flatbeds as part of the train. And she said that when it came time to go, he came over and hugged them all and said goodbye. And she said, "we all cried. We had no reason to." They had no reason to cry, except that daddy wouldn't be going home for dinner and that sort of thing. They didn't worry about anything else. But anyway. So he went off to Baltimore, and about ten days to two weeks later, my grandmother told me she got worried about Siney. His name was Simon. They called him Siney. And she hadn't heard from him in all that time. So she asked her brother, John Kelly, to go to Baltimore to see if he could find any news about her husband, Simon. And he had a carriage and a horse. And he clipped clopped over to Baltimore and nosed around, and he finally found him.

00:06:26 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

The story is that she said to me, told me, is that he was leaning against a building that was still burning. His boots were full of water. He was feverish. He just didn't even know who he was. So her brother Jack just grabbed Simon and put him into his wagon and drove back to Washington. He didn't say anything to anybody. I just wondered if whatever happened

00:06:54 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

No accountability.

00:06:56 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Right. I mean, so anyway, so he brought him to his home. 1108 Florida Avenue. And thank God my grandmother had the sense to know that he was really sick. So she got him in bed and did whatever you could do. But then she called the fire chief. I mean, the office. And they sent an ambulance and took him to a hospital. It could have been Gallinger's for all I know these days. Casualty, maybe. I don't know. But to the hospital. And he stayed in the hospital for quite a while. And then she got a call from the fire chief's office saying "Good news. He's able to leave the hospital, and we're going to send him way out in the country where he won't have to work hardly at all." By now he's a lieutenant or a foreman. Sure enough, Foreman. And so they sent him to 22 Engine, which is at Georgia and Missouri Avenue. That's way out in the country. That's what they thought. And then so and his guys worked for him because he still was a vet. He couldn't get out of bed, but he was. In fact, he did even after a while. I don't know how long, but after a while he was able to actually get up and go to work.

00:08:14 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And my grandmother had rented away Florida Avenue to somebody and rented another apartment three doors up from the firehouse. And it's still there. My mother told me about it. It has a little balcony. It's right on George Avenue, about two doors up from the firehouse. So the kids loved it. My mother was 12 years old at this point, and she thought -. And by the way, she told me, "I think I was his favorite." [To Donald Neil] You never knew Nana, did you? I think so, anyway. She was quite a lady. And after she'd run home from school and she'd grab something to eat and snack, and she'd go down to the firehouse, or before he could go to work, she'd go upstairs to his room and she'd read to him. She said, "I used to read to him and rub his feet. That's why I was his favorite." But he did finally go to work. So now the kids are three doors up from Daddy's, where he's there all the time. And they had long hours in those days, as you know. So they would go down to the firehouse. And one of the things that she said they used to do, they begged him to hit the bell so that the horses would run out. Oh, man. "No, no, no, I can't do that. No, I won't do that. It's not good for the horses and it's not good for the men." And now, I get it. And they just beg and beg and beg. And he finally said "Okay. Okay." And he drew a line in chalk on the floor and he'd say, "you stand right here. This is going to be dangerous. You have to stand right here. And if you move, I'm never going to do this again. You just have to stand right here." Okay. Okay. So he told the guy that he was going to hit the bell. And what happened when he hit? When anybody hit the bell? Hit the bell. The thing. The stall enclosure was opened up, so the horses ran out, and they were just where they were to go. And my mother, every time she told the story, she'd say, "and the horses would come like this. We could see their hooves coming down. And every time they'd just stop right there. It was wonderful, wasn't it? And then daddy would have the firemen take the horses out on to Georgia Avenue and calm them down, because they were all thinking they were going to a fire."

00:10:42 **Amy Mauro**

Disappointed.

00:10:43 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah. So that's a good story. She loved to tell that story. She loved to get their hooves going. And what else I could tell you about is my grandmother. She was, as I said, she was six years

younger than him, so she was 30. He died, by the way. He died in 1905. That would be like less than a year after the Baltimore fire. So, Chief Kelleher and he was another guy involved too. Simister. Yes. Right. Battalion Chief, is he still in the department?

00:11:29 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

He is. He's Matt's chief.

00:11:31 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Oh, good. He's the 1st chief. Tell you what. Next one, he may amount to something someday. I think he's a great chief.

00:11:39 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

He was a Tillerman when I was at 10.

00:11:41 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

No kidding. Yeah.

00:11:43 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

He has something he wanted me to ask you, too. And you? Mainly you.

00:11:47 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

About Simon. About timing. Yeah.

00:11:50 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Okay. You know, the memorial project, the helmets?

00:11:54 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

The ghost helmets. Yeah.

00:11:57 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Somebody was saying, because he's now a line of duty death, that they want to put the helmet at 22 Engine. But Sinister was suggesting that maybe we want it at the Eckington freight yards.

00:12:08 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, that'd be great. That's where it happened. I mean, that's where it started.

00:12:13 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, that's what I figured. And 22. He wasn't there very long right before he died.

00:12:21 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah. That would make sense. And he joined In 88, right? Cause I know you said when he went on Christmas leave. That was 98. But he came on the job in 1888, right?

00:12:36 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I don't think that's.

00:12:38 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

What I had always heard from you.

00:12:41 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's all in there.

00:12:42 **Amy Mauro**

Yeah, we can find it.

00:12:43 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, I'm not positive about that.

00:12:47 **Amy Mauro**

And so he died in 1905. Can you tell us the circumstances that your grandmother told you.

00:12:53 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

He died of phthisis. P h t h I s I s. It's like some lung disease. And because of Chief Simister, they started looking at doing research on it and decided that it certainly was the result of all the smoke and stuff that he inhaled over in Baltimore. That's how it was. Line of duty. It wasn't some accident later on. It was from the Baltimore fire, and he never really totally recovered from it. So that's why they finally determined it was the cause of his death.

00:13:35 **Amy Mauro**

And you told me before we started recording that his wife received \$40 for the funeral. Is that right? And then \$75 a month.

00:13:45 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

The big-hearted fire department gave her \$40 to help with funeral expenses. And then Chief Belt, the guy who became chief. Belt. Well, he was the chief then. That's right. He's the one that went to whoever you go to. I guess it would be the mayor at the time and got him up to \$75 for that. And then they would - she was getting \$40 a month for pension with five

children. So it wasn't pretty swell. That's why we loved the union.

00:14:26 **Amy Mauro**

Yeah. And so that's also further evidence that it was a line of duty death. I I've heard his story before because when I was chief of staff the department decided to include him in the Roll of Honor because he had not been included until, I think, 2022. And that's when we met for the first time. So thank you. Can you tell the story a little bit about how that came to be? Because I know you advocated to recognize him as part of the Roll of Honor.

00:14:58 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Well, I, I indicated through letters, asking that somebody at least check something and research, do some research, because I didn't know anything, really, except for what I just told you guys. And that's when Simister and Kelleher and those guys, they really went by on their own. They just did it. And I think it's Kelleher, that's the one so organized. God, he was great. He still is a great.

00:15:31 **Amy Mauro**

He is a great researcher and historian.

00:15:34 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I was amazed. The stuff that he used to play. We got the newspaper articles. He was wonderful. And so I just ... know that [Simon] deserves to be honored in that way. All those guys in those days, they didn't have any masks. They didn't have anything. It was so hard to be a firefighter in those days. It's not easy now. But it was so hard in 1959 when I went on, they suggested I have a sponge handy to put in my mouth. That would be my mask. We had one mask in a suitcase on the wagon, and that was in case a citizen needed help. Like, I think they said for drowning or something. I don't know. It was just ridiculous. But we it was not for us. So we had to do the old sponge trick.

00:16:33 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

When did they get actual masks for you?

00:16:37 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It was. I went on in 59. It was probably another five years. Let's say 62, three, four. Somewhere in there. And then that would be two masks. One for the officer, one for the lineman, because the officer would have to have one because he was busted. I don't know. I don't know for sure.

00:17:00 **Amy Mauro**

So before we get to the 50s. So that was 1905 that he died?

00:17:05 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yes.

00:17:05 **Amy Mauro**

Who was the next relative to serve in the department?

00:17:11 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Oh, wait a minute. Now, that would be, I guess, Joe. Joe Mayhew. The one who became fire chief in 49. He probably was the next guy, but Simon had, um. I've never thought about this one. Maybe John McLean, who was Simon's son? But I don't know his dates. I don't know.

00:17:35 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

He was an old 12, right?

00:17:38 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

He was at 12. He was appointed to 12. But he ended up at 26 when he retired. But he was ... I've heard him tell this story. "When I went on, I was a rookie. And if we went out to Brookland, it was my job to bring the third horse so that I'd run with the third horse up to Rhode Island Avenue or up North Capitol to Rhode Island," and they'd hook the horse to get up the hill to get to Brookland. And he said, "God, I was exhausted by the time I left for the day." He ran alongside with the horse. So anyway, I don't know. I don't know when I.

00:18:25 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Made mention of dates for John McLean in here [the family history book].

00:18:29 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

They probably are somewhere. Anyway. So let's say it was John because he was the direct, but he's not in my line. He's my mother's brother. Okay. You know what I mean? Your uncle. So he's probably not in mine. I've never thought of adding him. So the next person as far as what this conversation is, would be my father. Okay. And he was appointed to Truck 13 on Maryland Avenue when it was there. I don't know the dates of his appointment, but they may be in there, too. But then they moved to the current house on Florida Avenue. And he was there in 1925 when he was part of.

00:19:25 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I don't mean to fact check you, but Engine 10 was on Maryland Avenue first, 1895. And then they erected.

00:19:34 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Did you say 1895?

00:19:35 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

They erected the firehouse in 1925 on Florida Avenue and it was just Truck 13.

00:19:42 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I see. Thank you.

00:19:43 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Then they moved Engine 10 from Maryland Avenue.

00:19:45 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I see.

00:19:46 **Amy Mauro**

And when did engine ten?

00:19:47 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

If they only could have left it that way, huh?

00:19:49 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I can't remember what year they said Engine 10 moved to that firehouse, but it was originally just Truck 13.

00:19:56 **Amy Mauro**

It's condos now. And my brother looked at one and I went, and I really wanted him to buy it, but he didn't.

00:20:03 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

It still says Engine number 10 house.

00:20:06 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah. It's neat. Something that you were, you just said reminded me of something I wanted to tell you. It'll come back. This is the trouble with being old and dumb, but it'll come back.

00:20:20 **Amy Mauro**

So your father.

00:20:21 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

But your dad was part of opening the 13 Truck.

00:20:25 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

10 Engine, Truck 13.

00:20:27 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Although it was only a truck company house like Truck 4.

00:20:30 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, and my mother told me this, that they had an open house when this happened, and she said Daddy had his own room.

00:20:40 **Amy Mauro**

For the officers. He was an officer?

00:20:44 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Daddy was not an officer. He was a private, you know. Oh, yeah. He was just, he was a new kid in in the department when this happened. And but remember, have you been to 10 Engine?

00:20:57 **Amy Mauro**

I have.

00:20:58 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

But the old 10 Engine. Well, that was a hell of a long time ago.

00:21:04 **Amy Mauro**

Where was the old 10?

00:21:05 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It was the same place, but.

00:21:06 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Before they renovated.

00:21:07 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

They gutted it.

00:21:08 **Amy Mauro**

Oh, so no I wouldn't have seen it.

00:21:10 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

There was - That was a long pole from where we used to sleep. And down to the. Anyway, the officer had his bedroom in the front of the house and then they had six guys on the truck, I mean, five guys on the truck with the officer, and they all had their own damn room. And of course then when Engine 10 came in, that was the end of that.

00:21:39 **Amy Mauro**

And so your father was a firefighter when you were born?

00:21:43 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

When I was born, I was born in 1931. So he wasn't because he was only in about six years, I think.

00:21:51 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Or maybe that's around the time when he had to leave.

00:21:54 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I don't know. He was at a fire on - they were on the fire on 10th Street, I think, on the other side of Sherwood Playground. The west side of Sherwood Playground. And I guess the engine didn't know. They don't care about truck guys, you know. So they just went and shot water and they got him in, hit him in the ear and deafened him. And he they took care of the initial stuff. And then he went to the Fire Prevention division, which he hated going around looking at extinguishers, dates and things like that in apartments and all that. So he retired and that's when he went to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, which is what he did when - all the time I knew my father. He was a printer at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

00:22:49 **Amy Mauro**

I see. So you don't remember the times when he was a firefighter? Would he tell you about the job?

00:22:57 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

No, he never talked about it. No. He didn't. He was a - my daddy was an athlete. And good. He was city wide, known as a football and baseball player. And then when he got older, he was known as a really good bowler. So he was he was quite well known. There were times in that ... In that book, there's an article about his retirement and how he was cited. I think it said several times for his heroism during his short career, but he never talked about that.

00:23:43 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I'm assuming they didn't have disability retirement then either, because I don't know. That definitely would have been, you know, a disability retirement.

00:23:52 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Oh, definitely. Maybe they did have - I don't really know. You know, I didn't. All I knew is we lived well. Daddy was working. Everything was lovely.

00:24:03 **Amy Mauro**

And where were you born? Where did you grow up?

00:24:05 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I was born in Old Providence Hospital, private Sibley hospital. Oh, Sibley. Sibley. It used to be over in southeast. Near you. Somewhere over there.

00:24:18 **Amy Mauro**

Oh, well, Providence was at, Third and E, Southeast. At least I know that.

00:24:24 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I think Sibley was on North Capitol.

00:24:27 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

North Capitol. That's where it was.

00:24:28 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

That's like where? 1211 North Capitol.

00:24:31 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Ah, yeah. Okay. That's right. It's called Sibley Plaza, I think. Yeah. And that's where I was born.

00:24:38 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

So it says here, Papa. Your dad was appointed in 23. 23 and 1929 is when he was struck.

00:24:49 **Amy Mauro**

And your father's name? I meant to ask was what?

00:24:52 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

My daddy. Anthony LeGrand. Mayhew. Okay. That's what I always said. LeGrand L - it's a capital L, little E, capital G - r - a - n - d - e. And I finally found out that I asked my mother, and she said it was because his mother. Well, his father was a farmer down near Annapolis. And they went to Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Annapolis And his mother really liked the pastor, whose name last name was LeGrand. So that's how my father got the middle name of LeGrand. And my brother was a junior. Real junior. We're not junior and senior. I made a

point of that.

00:25:45 **Amy Mauro**

Great story. So you were born at Sibley. And where did you grow up?

00:25:50 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

1004 I Street, Northeast. I loved that neighborhood. It was wonderful. If you were White. It was a wonderful place to grow up, you know. And I don't mean that there were any problems between the races. They weren't, because the races didn't... There was three, no, 4 or 5 houses, wooden houses, two story houses in the 900 block of I Street on the south side, and they were all black families, and they were. You'd see the little kids. I'd see them all playing in the yard and all that. But there was no interaction. We never played with them, and they never played with us. It was just, you know, isn't that weird? It's just weird that kids, I don't know, but I'm here at 1004 and they're right over there because they had a lot of friends here, but I didn't need them. I know it just was sad. Yeah, but that's where I grew up. Went to Holy Name School, West Virginia Avenue, and all this is around 10 Engine. You know, you were first due where I grew up and had fun.

00:27:13 **Amy Mauro**

Holy name is still there.

00:27:15 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

But it's not Holy Name anymore.

00:27:17 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

It's a charter school now.

00:27:18 **Amy Mauro**

There's a church called Holy Name.

00:27:20 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yes, that's on 11th Street.

00:27:22 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's 11th Street. 11th between I and K. I used to be an altar boy and a choir boy. At my back door at 1004. Turned right in the alley and turned left at the alley. And there was the back door of the church. Convenient. 630 mass every morning for a long time.

00:27:39 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

You know, we had a fire in there. The basement. A couple of years ago. Oh.

00:27:46 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Serious?

00:27:49 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yeah.

00:27:50 **Amy Mauro**

Well, I agree with you. It's a great neighborhood. ... So you're growing up, and at that point, were you related to the fire chief? Was it Joe Mayhew?

00:28:04 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

The fire chief? I loved him. He was a widower. And he had, I think it was five children, too. And his wife was my mother's sister. Her name was Nora, but we called her Noni. She died in our house. She told me this story, too. This is not pertinent to the fire department. Do you want to hear it anyway?

00:28:29 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

My mother said that one morning, she was in the kitchen, and she heard a knock on the door, and she went to the door. And here was Noni and Uncle Joe. And she said, "Can I come in?" And my mother said, "What? Are you crazy? Come on. Yes. Come on, come in." And so they came in back to the kitchen. Of course, that's where everybody did all the business. Turns out that they had just left the doctor. And she has serious, serious cancer. And she was asking if she could come in and die because she had all these children out there on Kearny Street where they lived, and Uncle Joe was okay with that. In fact, I'm sure he was grateful that my mother and father were willing to. They gave Nora their bedroom. And I do remember. I do remember standing by her bed and talking with her. I was a baby, you know, a little guy. And I remember them singing together. She was an alto and my mother was a soprano. And I remember they said they just loved to sing. My whole family were a bunch of singers and dancers and fun stuff, you know. And so, in fact, I think I know that's one of the things that convinced my darling Mary Lou - that she compared my family to hers when she said, "all my family does is argue about politics and religion." She asked about my family. I was telling stuff like this, you know, just one thing that convinced her to join me. Anyway, so I remember them singing, and I do remember her funeral because she was laid out as the term we used to use. I don't know, but she's in the casket in our living room. The casket is open and people are coming up the steps. And of course, there was a bottle in the kitchen and there was a couple of songs sung in the kitchen. I just remember being kind of frightened because I could see she was ... It was obvious she wasn't just sleeping, you know. She was gone. But there was always somebody with the casket. And I don't mean to say there was a big party, but it was an Irish wake.

00:30:56 **Amy Mauro**

It was an Irish funeral.

00:30:57 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, exactly. And so there was talk in the living room about Noni and how she could sing and stuff like that, and what a good mother she was. And then the guys were in the back room in the kitchen just talking about her, but having a drink or two. So I do remember that. And then I know where she's buried. She was buried at Fort Lincoln. And so was Uncle Joe. And so were my parents, by the way. That was weird. When Uncle Joe, when he became fire chief, he obviously got a big raise in pay because he bought, I'd say, like, ten graves or whatever. How would you put it? And he offered the two of them to my parents and they said, okay, thank you. And then his children are there and Noni is there.

00:31:54 **Amy Mauro**

So was that a firefighter cemetery then?

00:31:58 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

No. Fort Lincoln? No...

00:32:01 **Amy Mauro**

We have the memorial garden there. Oh. So just a coincidence, I guess, huh?

00:32:09 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I know I was right by their graves. The other day, I was over there for another funeral, and I went to see my parents.

00:32:20 **Amy Mauro**

So what was your uncle like?

00:32:22 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

He was. He was Holy Joe. This is what he was called. The fireman. No one used a curse word in the firehouse when Holy Joe was around and you showed up looking good and on time, and you showed up on the fireground to do what you were supposed to do. ... He was a good cook. He did get a lot of friends, had a lot of friends, and he and 5 or 6 other guys put their money together, and they bought a bay-built boat down out of one the places down there, maybe it was. I'm not sure. It's one of the places on the bay. It was called The Lollipop. And I have a picture of that in there. And in the summer time I'd be on the back porch upstairs. "Donnie, want to go fishing?" because his kids were all older than me and they were old. Jerry was the youngest and he was a wild boy. He was drinking when he was a freshman in high school. And Uncle Joe was just so glad to have somebody like me around who's anxious to - I, of course, I wanted to go fishing and I'd be with all these firemen on the boat. It was just so much fun. There was a lot of beer, and they even caught a fish once in a while. It was wonderful. So he really latched on to me because children were either getting married and raising a family, and Jerry was always out somewhere doing party things. So I became his sort of son, and I know he liked me a lot, and I really loved him. He was wonderful to me. We had a lot of fun together.

00:34:17 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

But he was a straight-laced guy. ... Whatever you were supposed to do - Damn it, you better do it. And so I caught on to that, too. I didn't do anything silly when I was around Joe. He and my father were - they loved each other, but they were not close. My dad wasn't at all like Joe. Joe was older, and I guess he felt some I don't know. I don't know. I won't say what he felt, at any rate. My daddy was totally different. Daddy was just. He was quiet. He didn't have much to say about anything. Well, my mother was very outspoken, and she had a lot to say about a lot of things. And I don't know if you know this, but she formed the. She was one of the women who formed the Ladies Auxiliary, it's called. And they had a parade every spring, usually in May. And they had this float. That's the picture of her on this float. And they had a baseball game at Griffith Stadium between the cops and the firefighters on the same day. On the same day. So it was quite a big thing. And then I remember a lot of parties in our basement at 1004 I Street. That's one of the things that my father was so good at. He was so good. ... He'd let me help him. I was a little guy. But he let me help him. He let me hold the hose and really wash out like you do the firehouse. Did they still do that?

00:35:55 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Every Saturday.

00:35:56 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Anyway, we did our basement that way because he got that from that same firehouse, I guess. It was just so much fun. And then he put me in the car. Come on, let's go down to the waterfront. We're going to get some crabs or oysters and shrimp or whatever the season was, and we'd go down there and he'd let me do these various important things, you know that I know he was - he never let me feel like I was useless or didn't know what I was doing, that sort of thing. And I think Uncle Joe would have said, well, this is not how you do it, Donnie. No, this is it, dad. My father would do it surreptitiously for me, you know? So I was glad that he was my Daddy and not Uncle Joe. But I did love Uncle Joe. It's weird. I think I'm talking too much.

00:36:51 **Amy Mauro**

No, no. So why did you decide to become a fireman?

00:36:57 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I didn't decide to become a fireman. I decided to try to get on the fire department for a while.

00:37:06 **Amy Mauro**

Likely story.

00:37:09 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I went to college after Gonzaga High School. I went to college in Indianapolis, Lincoln Chiropractic College, for four years, and I had my degree. Doctor of Chiropractic. Yes. By the way, I'd like a little more respect from you people. And the guy who was my mentor,

when I finished my college, I was offered an internship in Canada for six months, and I took it. And I loved it, it was good. I met the people up there and it was good. And after that, then I knew that it was time for me to show up. So I had to be drafted. You know, they allowed me to be deferred, is the word. And they gave me that internship. So I raised my hand. And so I became a United States Army soldier for two years. And after one of those years, they sent me to Germany, to the 98th General Hospital, because I had my background and they thought of me as an x-ray person because I was good at that. And so they sent me to this 98th General Hospital in Neubrücke in Germany.

00:38:37 **Amy Mauro**

And what year was that?

00:38:38 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

This was 1955. And when I showed up, they told me the sergeant or somebody told me that's your bunk and your locker. Now go to x-ray and tell them you're here and they'll take over. I get to x ray and they say "we don't need anything." So I said, "you don't need me." I said, "I came from Washington, D.C. and you don't need me." "And so go back to your company quarters and tell them we don't need you." So that's what I did. And the captain in charge of this company said, "Okay, Mayhew, you just show up here. We'll find something for you to do. Don't worry about that. You just show up here at 8:00 every morning, and the sergeant here will tell you what to do." Well, that scared the hell out of me. So I started peeking around and seeing what people were, various people were doing. And I saw these guys who were... But I'm getting to that now. But about 5 or 6 days of picking up cigarette butts, getting coffee, stuff like that. The sergeant one day, said . "Mayhew, there's a new Red Cross girl and she needs help setting up her office, hanging some pictures, and moving the desk. I don't know what she needs, but just go." And there she is.

00:40:18 **Amy Mauro**

Your wife.

00:40:19 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And I knocked on the door and I heard. "Come in." And there she was, that same lady. She was stunning. She was so beautiful.

00:40:29 **Amy Mauro**

She is beautiful. What's her name?

00:40:31 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Mary Lou Hill.

00:40:34 **Amy Mauro**

And what's this?

00:40:35 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

That we had a one-year ceremony. Not ceremony - meeting. Gathering of our children in this room after the first year after she died. And everybody was going to talk or do something. And Beth's our daughter. Beth's husband is not a good talker and - at least he thinks of himself as not worthy. Or, you know, it's silly, but he's a dear boy and so he, instead of preparing something to say, he gave me that. He whittled that and gave it to me in lieu of his contribution for that evening. And I make a point of telling him I still have that. He's a dear guy, dear man.

00:41:32 **Amy Mauro**

So you met in Germany?

00:41:33 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, we met in Germany, and she was from Pontiac, Michigan. She had been to the University of Michigan, graduated in social work, and she had worked for the city of Detroit for a time, and that she didn't like that she had to go there on the train. And somebody said to her, her mother's friend was had a lot to do with the Red Cross in Pontiac, Michigan. So Lou said, okay, I'll try it. So she did that and she was there, still living at home with mom and one of her Red Cross superiors said, Lou, you're 25. Whatever. You're how old and you're still living with mom. That's not good. That's not healthy. You know, we have this service to military hospitals. You could go all over the world. You shouldn't be staying here in Pontiac. You're a college graduate. You're pretty, and you're all that stuff. So she looked it up, and sure enough, they would. They were delighted to have her. And she went. First of all, she stayed here in the States to Colorado and, several really nice places. And then she heard that she could go to Germany. So she raised her hand.

00:42:50 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And five days after I got there, she got there. And I knew that I had to bother the hell out of her because I had to. I had to be with that lady, and she was living in the officer's quarters because she wasn't in the army, but she was living with the nurses, for example, you know, up on the hill and the rest of us were down here in the valley. We had a motor pool. And so I had to sneak up there. Bush to bush to bush to bush - you remember the Wiley Coyote or whoever was that guy was going from bush to bush. And when they caught no MPs gone by and all that - crash through the front door and up to the second floor, and she'd have the door open into her room. And bam! She did that for several times. And then I said, I'd really like to take you out to, you know, we could go over to all these in Germany. It was wonderful. You know, we could go to the river. And she said, yeah, but, you know, I said, well, I have a plan. So I said, next time we're going someplace, you come out of your building, go to your trunk and lift and look in the trunk and then go to the front of the front seat and look around. And when you're looking around the front seat, I'm going to come from the bush and dive into the trunk. You go bam! And that's what I did. So I jumped. So I got into the trunk and she just calmly got in and went to the gate. And she's going, Miss Hill is leaving and the MPs are standing there smiling. She's gorgeous, you know. Anyway, I was in the trunk going. And then we could. That's how we started. We did that for a year. I got in the trunk for a year and it was just wonderful. We had just it was just a wonderful, wonderful courtship.

00:44:49 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And finally I convinced her. ... I was sold from the very moment I saw her, but it took me probably 5 or 6 months to convince her. And one time she had a serious relationship with a guy and a surgeon in Colorado. Some hospital there. And when he heard she was coming to Germany, he got himself some orders to go to Germany. To England? England. He was going to. And he said, "hey, look, why don't you give me your - sell me your car and I can take it over on my orders." He was a colonel. And so she did. He gave her a dollar for her car and put it in his name and took it to Germany. And she said to me one day, I am going to London next weekend. I said, "oh, that's interesting, that's nice." And she said, "I'm going to meet Conny and get my car." And I said, oh, it didn't sound so nice anymore. You know, he's a colonel and I'm a little bit private. So she came back and she got the call. I got the car and I said, yeah, I know I saw you and I asked her how the weekend was. She said yes. He took me to see Kismet, and we went out to dinner and did this, that and the other. And she was telling me all this fun stuff and she could see my face falling and falling. And so she stopped and she said, "I told Connie about you and me. He wishes us well."

00:46:27 **Amy Mauro**

That's great.

00:46:29 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And the next week there's - up there is the little guy Hummel. "She loves me. She loves me not." Can you see it? It's up right up there. Anyway, she handed this to me the next couple of days. After a couple of days went by. This is my gift from her. Love it. That was a happy guy. And we were that way for 61 years, four months and five days.

00:47:01 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

So who's counting?

00:47:04 **Amy Mauro**

So you came back to the States. You got married? Where did you?

00:47:07 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Settle? We got married in the States. I mean, in Germany. She said "if I go home, my mother's going to want 14 bridesmaids and all that stuff. I'd really like to get married here." So that's what we did. We had very. We just did the whole thing, and it was just so sweet. It was just wonderful. And then, we come back and I have to go to work. Now I'm out of the army. Finally, we had the same. I didn't have to ride the truck anymore. We had the same red Chevy convertible with white seats. That's what she bought with her first job. And we had that still. So we drive down here, and I went to see my mentor who said, "I'm getting a lot of patients from Southern Maryland." So yeah, southern Maryland. They had a Leonardtown. He said, "If I were you, I would go down there." He said, "I don't want all those patients you can have. I don't need them." So we went to Leonardtown. We rented a 300-year old house, which was all we had. My brother and I formed an office out of the downstairs of this big old place. And we did quite well, much as so well that I opened an office in a hotel over in

Lexington Park, where there's a big Navy base, because I was getting patients from there.

00:48:31 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

So we were doing quite well until one night, by now we have Mary, our sweet baby, our first baby girl. And we walked down to Breton Bay - it's part of where Leonardtown is. And there was a nice restaurant down there on the water. We went down there for dinner. Mary's in the buggy and we're coming back up the hill. And coming down the hill is us: same thing. Mom, dad and the baby in the buggy. Only they were black. We're coming up and they're coming down. And when we got reasonably close, they stepped off the sidewalk. And so we, of course, we stopped there and talked with them and talked about the cute babies and all that stuff. But we all four adults knew what had just happened. And so we got home, we had that talk and we decided we can't raise a family in this atmosphere. So that's when we came. I said, don't worry about it. We'll come up to Washington and have a lot of friends in Washington. We'll be fine.

00:49:36 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

So I rented an office over on Georgia Avenue and nobody came. And so we bought a rented a house on University Boulevard, and nobody came there either. And one day Lou said, "honey, where's the camera? I want it." By now we have Mary and Paul. She said, Paul, just the baby's doing something cute. She wanted a picture of this baby doing something cute. And I said, "Well, it's there. And she said, "Oh, there's no film in it. Give me a couple of dollars. I'll run up to the drugstore." And I didn't have any money. And so I had been working at Hecht's and here and there on the sly, Dr. Mayhew hoping that none of my few patients would come in to buy a necktie or something from me. So that got my attention when I couldn't give her \$2 or \$3 for a film. So I called my brothers, who were both D.C. firefighters. Do you know that? My brother Tony was the first. And then came Francis. He was at 10 Engine a long time ago. And they said, "yes, I think they are hiring, let me call." They called. You know what? One guy used to run the personnel department. Johnny. I'm serious.

00:51:01 **Amy Mauro**

I'm not surprised.

00:51:02 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's really screwed. He said, "Donnie, Tony called me. You want to come on the department?" I said, "Yeah, I really need a job." And he said, "will you come by tomorrow morning and we'll do some. We'll talk about it in two weeks." I was walking in Engine 17 as the new probationer, two weeks, because my name was Mayhew.

00:51:26 **Amy Mauro**

And you did the on-the-job training. Did you go to the Training Academy first or did you go to Engine 17?

00:51:32 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

No, no, we went to work. We went to the fires.

00:51:37 **Amy Mauro**

And what year? Tell me again what year?

00:51:39 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

That was 58 when I was in training. I was appointed in 59. And I was able to take the test for sergeant in I think it was 65. Is that right? About that time? 65. And there were several of us. Who was it?

00:52:03 **Amy Mauro**

Robert Banasik.

00:52:05 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

He was one of them. He was in my class. And we all - it was probably, I don't know, 12, 20 of us, a bunch of us. They had a class just for us. And they said "we don't know what the hell we're going to do with you if you don't pass because you're in over five years. You're all in over five years." So it was really kind of an enjoyable time at the school for us. It was fun. We had fun. So then I went on and I was going to work, and I did, in fact, do this. I kept my office open on day work. I had evening hours if anybody would show up and vice versa. So night work, I'd have day morning hours. So it just wasn't working at all. And I was having so much fun at the firehouse that I took my sign off of the lawn on University Boulevard. The house we rented is still there, but the sign is gone, and we never looked back. We had just a wonderful life together.

00:53:11 **Amy Mauro**

So it worked out.

00:53:12 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Oh, it worked out.

00:53:13 **Amy Mauro**

Joining the fire department.

00:53:14 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Oh, my God, it was wonderful. It saved their lives. Really, but I didn't intend to be a firefighter until I got to be a firefighter. And I really liked it.

00:53:24 **Amy Mauro**

Why? Why did you not want to at first?

00:53:27 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Because I was a doctor. My word. I had no idea what it was like to be a firefighter.

00:53:36 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

What was it like? It was so wonderful. so wonderful. We mentioned the Schafer family before. Paul Schafer was my lieutenant, and oh God, we played basketball out back. We played volleyball, we played ping pong. And once in a while, we'd really study hard to learn the district and stuff like that, you know.

00:54:01 **Amy Mauro**

And where were you assigned?

00:54:02 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I was assigned to Engine 17, and then when I was on the list to get promoted to sergeant, they let me go to 13 Truck for truck experience. And then when I was promoted, they sent me to Truck 12 down the street. And that was brutal. It was so hard. It was so hard.

00:54:28 **Amy Mauro**

Why?

00:54:30 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

When I went there, there would be five guys on the engine. Six on the truck. I think that's right. 11 guys and they'd be all over the firehouse when it came time to eat. They were brown bag lunches. So I started cooking and boy, they really liked that. You know, it was really good.

00:54:53 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

And you can't do it again.

00:54:54 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah.

00:54:56 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I'm sure they said, bet you can't do it again.

00:54:58 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I know. So anyway, I did. I cooked for about a year, but towards the end of the year - this is 68 now. The riots started. And when that started I was, thank God, sent to 6 Truck and spent a lot of time on the street with those guys and we'd go back to. They were on Park Road and we'd go back and probably get about 4 or 5 hours of sleep and go back on the street again. It

was hard. It was hard duty.

00:55:35 **Amy Mauro**

Can you tell us a little bit about the riots?

00:55:38 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Well, yeah, I can tell you about the first night, for example. When I heard that Doctor King had been assassinated, I, asked to go around, go for a walk, and we took whoever was little at that time. And I said, honey, I'm pretty sure I'm going to be called back because the city's in trouble. And, sure enough, by the time we got back, I had a phone call to Plan E is what we had in those days.

00:56:13 **Amy Mauro**

I think it was F - full mobilization. I was told it was Plan F.

00:56:19 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

They were both.

00:56:20 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Okay.

00:56:21 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I'm just explaining this. Probably after your time. In my time, it was plan E and Plan F. And Plan E was 12 hour mobilization and Plan F was 24 - everyone there.

00:56:35 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

That's all. Obviously I didn't play an F, but when I was a private, I was a sergeant, and that's what I meant. Anyway, whatever they called it, I had to go and stay. And I stayed away for probably a couple of weeks because I was working with, as I said, Truck 6 and Engine 11. And we stayed probably maybe about six blocks of 14th Street from Park Road South at 6th and Harvard and on down to Irving. And we just knocked it down and then moved to the water cannons to the next building and knock it down. And it just went on and on and on because we couldn't - there was not time to do a good job on one building. Right? So, as I said, there was a couple of weeks before we really got to come home and get back to some sort of a normal routine. And then having had that experience and of course had to go back to, 12 Truck and I put in the request for a transfer, and the captain up here said, "rookies don't ask for transfers." I said, "I'm not a rookie. I'm a sergeant. I need to get out of here." He said, "Well, I'll see what I'll see." He didn't endorse it, or the captain did not endorse it favorably. But anyway, people talk and I think the guys that were on Park Road, we got along so good. I think I had some help from there. And so I did get to go to 6 Truck. And there was one guy, Billy Embry.

00:58:18 **Amy Mauro**

Any relation to Jimmy?

00:58:23 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah. Brother.

00:58:24 **Amy Mauro**

Oh, they were brothers.

00:58:25 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah. Bill is the older brother of Jimmy. And they both grew up around 12 Engine neighborhood, hanging around 12 Engine. Anyway, he was my truck driver and he was just so good. We had a lot of fun there, a lot of fire. I learned a lot. I learned a lot at 13 Truck and at 6 Truck. I learned so much about how you do things, not just on the fireground. How you handle yourself, and especially if you're in charge. Once you get in charge, it's different, you know, really different. You'll find that out. Because, when you make a decision and you're in charge, everybody's looking to see how is he going to handle this? You know, and everybody's looking, including the possible evildoers. So it's totally different. But that house was so much fun. 4 Truck and 6 Truck. 6 Engine. It was so much fun. I loved it all.

00:59:26 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Oh, let me tell you one quick story about that - when I got to 4 Truck. I just told this story recently because Bear Boseman died. I went to his funeral. ... We both were privates for a long time, 6 or 7 years. And I'd be detailed to 4 Truck from 17 Engine. And I'd walk in the door with my helmet and my boots and like this, they'd go - "Ambulance." I seldom got to ride on the truck, but a few times I did. And anyway, it was fun. So that was when I was a private. And now I'm a lieutenant and I go back to 4 Truck as a lieutenant and my driver's Bear. And the first, I hadn't put my stuff down. And the bell hit. I put my stuff down and just got in the front seat. I grabbed my boots and a helmet, you know, and sitting next to Bear. And so I reached for the air horn which was on the starboard wheel. But also this thing over here. The officer pushes the button, you know. So I reached forward and he goes, bam! He slapped my hand. I said "Bear." He said, "Donnie, I know you're the lieutenant and all that crap, but this is my truck. If that horn needs to be blown, I'll blow it." I said, "that sounds good to me, Bear." He was such a character. Oh, God, he was wonderful. He was so, so grouchy and good. He was just wonderful.

01:01:13 **Amy Mauro**

I think that's a DC tradition. Grouchy and wonderful technicians.

01:01:18 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Well, anyway, then I got promoted to captain from there. So, of course, when you get promoted, you give a dinner and all that stuff. And I did. And Bear had arranged. They gave me - I was really moved touched. They gave me a Zippo cigarette lighter. Everybody was smoking in those days, including me and my captain. D. Mayhew, engraved on it. Wasn't that

sweet? That was the sweetest idea. Anyway. And it was him. He did that. Anyway, he was all lovey dovey, and I'm leaving, and "Well, I'll be in touch," And you know, "you come back now." Anyway, I walked out the back door of the firehouse, the big house, and I heard somebody say. "Look. Lieutenant, Look." And I did. I looked up and all the way coming down, they said, "Look." And they poured two gallons. I mean, two, five-gallon buckets of water. It was coming. I mean, it was there. It was. Timing was just perfect. I wrote him a letter. I said that was so perfect I couldn't believe it. So I looked up and bam! And that's how my comfortable evening love fest ended. It was just so perfect for that bunch. Joe Kirkpatrick and Joe Lane did that. I was so pleased.

01:02:44 **Amy Mauro**

So what year did you become a captain?

01:02:52 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

... Must have been probably 76, something like that. 75 or 6. Somewhere in there. I was a lieutenant ... Baxley convinced me to come to 2 Truck. He was the captain there. So I did. And from there I went to. Oh, I just stayed there. I stayed there and that I got that crazy chief, you know, there's no sense getting into it. Had a guy who just for some reason, didn't take a shine to me and followed me around, in public, ordering me to, for example, smoke coming off the roof across from Saint Patrick's Cathedral on M Street. Smoke coming off the roof. So we pull up. I'm in charge of the truck, and I asked my truck driver to go up, and he came back and said "Nothing. It's just the steam scare." And so he comes over to me and I said, "it's just a steam scare, chief. We can go back into the service." He said, "Did you go up and look?" And he knew I didn't go up there. I said, "No, I didn't go up there." I said, "I sent my truck driver up, I trust him." He said, "No, you go up like there." Like it was some big feat or whatever. You know, it's just ridiculous. So of course I did. And I came back down and said, "Steam scare, Chief." And he did stuff like that just over and over and over again, and everybody knew what was going on except me. I mean, I didn't know. I didn't know. I never did anything to him, I know that. But anyway, he was kind of crazy.

01:04:38 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

So now I get to be the captain. I'm leaving there and going to 21. That was a nice thing, too. It was a good place to be. Anyway, the last day there, this guy, this chief comes out and I'm sitting on M Street in one of those little log benches they had down there. And he didn't touch me, but he was sitting on the bench there, and he sat here, and he put his arm around the back of the wood. He said, "Lieutenant, congratulations on your captaincy. And, I just want you to know that you're the best truck officer I've ever had worked for me." I just got up and left. He just was so awful to me. He never did trust me, you know? That's a feeling that, I mean, you don't follow an officer around and make him do things, you know, like drills. He had me one day. I had the kid. We had a rookie. So we had the stick up and we'd go up to the ladder and it's unsupported. And you hook your pump here, belt in and your arms back to show how brave you are and all that nonsense. So he pulled up when we were in the middle of this and he said, "I want all the boys, all the guys to go up and do that." And I said, chief, he's got so many years of experience. I mean ..." "That's an order." So they all came up and down and all that crap. It was so bad. And so they said, "you can put the stick down." And he said, "No, I want you to go up." I said, "Chief, you're in front of my men. You're ordering me to go up as if I'm not brave enough to do that." "Just go up." So I did, came back. And this is the same

guy that told me I was the best truck officer he ever had.

01:06:44 **Amy Mauro**

Strange psychology.

01:06:46 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's so weird. He was crazy. And after that,

01:06:51 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I thought you left your truck to go to 21, not 2 Tuck. I thought 2 Truck was before 4 Truck. It was. Yeah. I mixed up there.

01:07:02 **Amy Mauro**

So 2 to 4 and then 21. And you retired out of 21? Yeah. Chris sent me some photos. Actually, I should show them to you.

01:07:11 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Say that again.

01:07:12 **Amy Mauro**

Chris Zervas sent me some photos from that time. So, scheduling question. I don't want to delay lunch. It's a 12:45. We can pause, take a break, and we can talk during lunch. I think that will be more efficient. And I want to hear about your career and, Matt, when you started. And then I have some common questions that I'm going to ask all three of you. So we'll go back to your time as a firefighter. When I asked those other questions.

01:07:47 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Just two things I would like to add. Yeah, I'm very proud of two things. At 2 Truck, we rescued 19 old people from a nursing home on Newport Place. 19 and there was a fire and one engine. And of course it was a box alarm. A lot of people were there. But we got 19 people out of that, put them on sheets and sliding them down hallways, down steps and stuff.

01:08:23 **Amy Mauro**

There was an old person home.

01:08:24 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah.

01:08:25 **Amy Mauro**

Was Donald Edwards there?

01:08:26 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Who?

01:08:27 **Amy Mauro**

Donald Edwards.

01:08:30 **Amy Mauro**

I don't remember that name.

01:08:31 **Amy Mauro**

He told me a similar story.

01:08:35 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

He was too young. Chief Edwards. Yeah, way too young for that. All right.

01:08:38 **Amy Mauro**

So keep telling me about it. It was on Newport.

01:08:42 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Newport place. Yeah. And I just was so proud that we got company of the year for that. And Don, Mom went down too. It was at the old municipal building down on 13th and Penn, and they had a big ceremony and mom went with me. I was proud of that. And then, we got it again at 21 for rescuing. I didn't have anything to do with the rescue, our company, we were sent for Wyresdale, and we were caught unawares because while we were there, one of my guys was up there and he was blocked. I sent the pumper up to block the traffic and he called and said, "We got a house off." So we ended up with a huge fire and one lady that we rescued and we got company of the year for that. There was five of us when this broke. It was just we did so good. I'm just so proud of these guys. It was just wonderful. So that's all I have to say. I can get lunch ready wow, if you'd like.

01:09:40 **Amy Mauro**

Good for you. Let's take a break and we'll. We'll talk again.

01:09:45 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Thank you sir. Otherwise, we'll be dealing with rush hour again. Let's get this show on the road.

01:09:53 **Amy Mauro**

We've reconvened over lunch, and, I'm going to ask, so we didn't quite cover your retirement in 1979. So you stayed - Well, you stayed for 20 years. That's kind of the minimum, right?

01:10:07 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yes. It is. And there was a reason for that. But that doesn't have to go in the record.

01:10:13 **Amy Mauro**

Ok. And so how old were you when your dad retired?

01:10:20 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

79. I was 16.

01:10:27 **Amy Mauro**

And so you grew up listening to. I mean, your family was an institution at that point in the fire service.

01:10:34 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

No, I wouldn't say that dad talked about it all the time at all. But I knew all these firemen, you know, from parties and stuff like that. Picnics...And so what's your what's the question, I guess.

01:11:02 **Amy Mauro**

When did you decide you wanted to be a firefighter?

01:11:04 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Not until later. ... There used to be a sporting goods store called Herman's. Matter of fact, there was one right there. Where was that? Like where the Boeymonger is. I was working there, and I knew I was never going to last at a job like that. Then I went into construction, which is what I did. Well, I'm still doing. I'm still in construction now, but I guess it was when Jenny was born, I was still working construction every day for a couple of guys I knew from the neighborhood. And ... I can't remember how I found out about the test being given. This was, I guess, 88, and by the time I got hired, it was 91. Even though I got like 99 point something on the exam or whatever ... just a lot of red tape. So I had gone to 21 a couple times and spent the night there and really liked it, you know, especially that firehouse that's one of the few traditional firehouses still left as far as the house itself. So I, I knew I would like it, and I knew that I wasn't cut out to work in an office or anything like that. ... I had a family. I had a daughter. Matt was born when I came on. And so I knew I needed a job that had benefits. Health insurance, all that stuff, which you don't have in construction. You know, so I just needed a secure job, and I knew that I would love it if I could get on. So that's basically how that started.

01:13:34 **Amy Mauro**

And how did you feel about that decision?

01:13:37 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Well, I loved it. In fact, I helped him get to 4 Truck to the big house.

01:13:44 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I tell him all the time, it's the best thing he ever did for me. Because that was the best time of my career. Truck 4, I was appointed to the truck, and I transferred to the engine with about two years on, what they call "slide the floor."

01:14:04 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

So I didn't like truck work. I still don't. I'm an engine guy.

01:14:11 **Amy Mauro**

So you were there when Vito was hanging out all the time.

01:14:18 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

He would hang out on number two. I was on number three. I can't remember who his guy was on number two platoon. I can't remember. But yeah he was there all the time.

01:14:40 **Amy Mauro**

So tell us more about your career and how it progressed.

01:14:46 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

So I did nine years at the big house, and then I got made. And when I got made, aides had been eliminated from the buggies. Because of budget cuts in like 94 or something like that. They had taken 3 Engine and 1 Truck away and they took the aides away. It was bad under Sharon Pratt, Mayor Barry. But when I got made, I got made in, I guess it was the end of 99, like almost 2000. So I had like nine years on the job. And what they did when I got made sergeant was they brought sergeants back into the buggy as the aide, whereas the aide had always been a private like when I was a private, the aide was always a private. And they created it as a sergeant's position. When I got made, I was the first group that they made aides sergeants. So I went to the 2nd Battalion, which was at 8 Engine. And I guess I spent like 4 or 5 years there as an aide slash sergeant. And then, when I got made, I went to 10 and I was there for nine years. So nine years at the big house, nine years at ten.

01:16:27 **Amy Mauro**

And not as an aide the whole time.

01:16:30 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

No, I was an aide for 4 or 5 years. When I got made lieutenant, I went to ten and I was at ten for nine years. And then after that they had a big Ellerbe transfer list with like 300 guys on it or whatever. And I got sent to 14 Engine, which I was really bitter about at the time, but it ended up being a good thing. I loved it there and then. So I was there, I think, for four years. And then I got made captain, and I went to 31 for a year and then transferred from 31 to Truck 17, where I did, 3 or 4 years. And then I retired from Truck 17.

01:17:25 **Amy Mauro**

Tell me about that 300 person transfer list. I haven't heard about that.

01:17:29 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I might be exaggerating, but it was a big like, it had to be like almost ten pages. He was bitter and mad and he just transferred everybody. So I was caught up in that.

01:17:46 **Amy Mauro**

Was it one of the first things he did or was it mid-tenure.

01:17:51 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

So when did he start? I don't remember when he became chief.

01:17:57 **Amy Mauro**

So Rubin left in 2010 - at the end of 2010. And so Ellerbe would have been appointed around January 2011, I think.

01:18:08 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah, I was transferred in 12. So yeah, it was...

01:18:16 **Amy Mauro**

Interesting times.

01:18:18 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah, that's one way to put it for sure.

01:18:21 **Amy Mauro**

So I worked for the city council during the control board years. And, so I'm familiar with that part of the department's history. The 90s were a tough time. For many reasons. But the budget cuts were difficult for the department...

01:18:46 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

One thing that was extremely tough for me, was they were doing a Russian roulette with closing firehouses down every day. And I think because the big house had three companies, I was assigned to 6 Engine and they chose 6 Engine all the time because it was centrally located, and they could still look good by having the truck and the squad run out of there. And meanwhile the engine is shut down.

01:19:23 **Amy Mauro**

But would they send you elsewhere? You would be detailed.

01:19:26 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Detailed wherever. A lot of times it was 14. So it took - I know there was a fire when I was detailed somewhere. I don't remember where I was detailed that day, but they had a fire a block from the firehouse, and I think it killed, like, 4 or 5 people, and, that helped do away with that. But, yeah, the 90s was a challenge as far as all that budget stuff went.

01:20:06 **Amy Mauro**

Did you ever worry about your safety during those years because of the resource challenges?

01:20:13 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I did.

01:20:15 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Well. Where I was, there was nothing. But, you know, like, for instance, when I was appointed to the big house, every technician had, I think, over 20 or 25 years on the job. All the guys were experienced. So, you know, they showed me the ropes. And I always knew that I had good guys that had my back. So I wouldn't say I worried about that. I mean, you always worried about back then with the apparatus, in general, because there were times when you couldn't get water out on fire because the pump, like, you constantly had to have a hose in the tank - it would be like they used to say, you're like dropping breadcrumbs just looking at the water trail all over the city, because all the wagons just leaked terribly.

01:21:22 **Amy Mauro**

Oh, wow.

01:21:23 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

So that happened several times where they'd pull up on something and couldn't get water because there was something wrong with the wagon. But I never, other than that, I would say no, because I was always fortunate enough to be with good companies.

01:21:54 **Amy Mauro**

And so you grew up with your father being a firefighter. And what was that like?

01:22:00 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Kind of similar to what my dad was saying. Like, I never really heard my dad speak much about the job. But there were times that I was, of course, fascinated with it as a kid. There were times growing up where he brought me around to show me the firehouse. And then as I got older, he did the same thing like you did. I stayed the night at Engine 10 when he was there and just really loved it. It was so much fun. Really cool experience.

01:22:40 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

What was it like there when you were a young child? I mean, were you the only young child there?

01:22:49 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yeah, it was fun. I can't wait to.

01:22:52 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

If you don't include the men.

01:22:55 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

There was no adult supervision.

01:22:59 **Amy Mauro**

I forgot to ask. So did you grow up on the in the University Boulevard neighborhood?

01:23:05 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I grew up on Jocelyn Street for the first part of my life. And then Northampton Street. And then when he retired in 79, we moved to Pennsylvania. And I finished high school up there. He wanted to get out of the city. Like you said, that's a long story behind that decision.

01:23:24 **Amy Mauro**

Okay. And so then where did you grow up?

01:23:25 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I didn't want to retire.

01:23:27 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I grew up - well, it started out we lived in Montgomery County and Wheaton. I guess it would be. And we lived there till I was 8 or 9 and we moved to Carroll County, Maryland, which I've been there ever since.

01:23:41 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Westminster.

01:23:45 **Amy Mauro**

Firefighter country.

01:23:47 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

A little further north. It's even more in Pennsylvania.

01:23:56 **Amy Mauro**

And so did you just always know that's what you wanted to do? Or did you take your time as well?

01:24:01 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yeah I did. It was always on my mind, but I never really - I was kind of lost for a couple of years, like after high school. Didn't really know or have a clue about life in general. But I ended up joining the military. I was in the Navy and I'll never forget it. It was a time we were out at sea and I was coming to a point in my Navy career where I either had to re-enlist or get out. And I was like, I didn't know. I didn't really know what I was going to do if I got out. And then my father told me, well, the department's having a test. And that was in 2015. And I was like, well, that's what I want to do.

01:24:58 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

So where were you?

01:25:00 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I was in Guam. So he basically walked me through the steps of getting online. And here's what you have to do at this time. And I was able to. You had to.

01:25:18 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Till the system crashed.

01:25:19 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yeah. Like, it was a crazy.

01:25:21 **Amy Mauro**

I remember that. I was the chief of staff. It was the first test in eight years.

01:25:26 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah, they'd been a long time.

01:25:27 **Amy Mauro**

That was another thing.

01:25:28 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

There wasn't any tests like. Between when I graduated high school until then.

01:25:38 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

But like I was saying, we were underway, and I was just like, yeah, I need to do something more. ... I loved it. I had a lot of fun, but I either need to switch pathways in the Navy or get out and go do something else. And I ended up flying home to take that test.

01:26:03 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Who paid for the flight?

01:26:05 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I did.

01:26:07 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

That's important. Yeah.

01:26:08 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I came home and that was another thing. They flipped around the dates for the test. Like when I was home on leave from the Navy. So I kind of had to work around that, but it ended up working out just fine.

01:26:24 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

You had a hand.

01:26:28 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

It was the best decision of my whole life.

01:26:30 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

But don't tell Veronica.

01:26:35 **Amy Mauro**

Who's Veronica?

01:26:36 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

His wife.

01:26:37 **Amy Mauro**

So why would we not tell her? Oh, the marriage. Yes. You know, I've interviewed many people, and most of them, they'll say that, and then they'll correct themselves and say. Except when - fill in the blank - I got married, I had my child.

01:26:50 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

She knows that. How much I love this job and everything.

01:26:56 **Amy Mauro**

I think this is so interesting. You know, when you hear about families with long histories in the fire service, you assume that it's ingrained, and there's a presumption that the next child will join. But each of you took your own path independently.

01:27:13 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I was never a volunteer, which is a big thing in the fire department. But we were always playing high school sports, you know. Whereas if you're a volunteer when you're in high school, you're normally not playing ball.

01:27:27 **Amy Mauro**

You head to the firehouse.

01:27:28 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Mhm.

01:27:29 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

And they asked me that when I first got to 10 Engine they're like "So why are you here? Why are you on this job?" You know they were feeling me out. I was like "Well I always wanted to do it." They're like "Well, why didn't you volunteer?" I was like, "I don't know."

01:27:44 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I love playing linebacker.

01:27:46 **Amy Mauro**

Because there's more to life guys -than that.

01:27:51 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Thankfully, you didn't say that.

01:27:54 **Amy Mauro**

I'll redact that.

01:27:55 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I mean, I didn't know what to say.

01:27:58 **Amy Mauro**

Were there others in your generations from your family who joined the fire service?

01:28:06 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

No. It's just Matt and myself. My brother Mike tried to get on, but the department was in the middle of a scandal with the promotion exam, and everything was held up for, like, 4 or 5 years. A long time of no hiring.

01:28:25 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yes. So that was mid-80s. And then. So they had not given an exam for the whole time that thing was going on 4 or 5 years, I'd say. And then I think, the exam that I took was the first one they had given since the court case had been settled.

01:28:50 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

There were thousands, I think that took your test.

01:28:55 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I can't remember the one.

01:28:57 **Amy Mauro**

It was two full days at the convention center.

01:29:00 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

5000 people, I think. There was a lot.

01:29:02 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

It's even more when I took. I think it was like 8000 people.

01:29:05 **Amy Mauro**

Oh my goodness.

01:29:07 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And if I may interrupt, he was 48th on the list of the 5000.

01:29:15 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Nice work.

01:29:19 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I'm so proud of you.

01:29:21 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Thank you.

01:29:21 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

That's why he hounds him to get promoted. Nonstop.

01:29:26 **Amy Mauro**

Right. So where were you assigned when you graduated?

01:29:30 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Thanks to him. Just like him. He got me appointed to 10 Engine.

01:29:35 **Amy Mauro**

Great. And you're still there?

01:29:37 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yes.

01:29:40 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I can't believe it's been seven years, man.

01:29:43 **Amy Mauro**

Time to take the test.

01:29:44 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

It's almost like I never want to leave there.

01:29:47 **Amy Mauro**

Did you take this test?

01:29:49 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

No.

01:29:49 **Amy Mauro**

You're gonna wait. Okay.

01:29:50 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It doesn't make any sense.

01:29:52 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Is there an exam?

01:29:54 **Amy Mauro**

There just was one.

01:29:54 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Yeah. That's right.

01:29:56 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

April. It's April now, right? 26 will be the next one.

01:30:03 **Amy Mauro**

Okay, so here's a question for all three of you. So tell me about mentors and strong leaders during your time with the fire department who you remember most significantly, all three of you, you can take turns answering.

01:30:19 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Well, there's no question Paul Shaffer was my hero. He was just an amazing man. So humble He worked like a dog. He had what he ate. Children. He and mama had, I don't know how many children. Most of them became firefighters. But he just was so honest and good and so straightforward and so brave and so smart. He was just an amazing man.

01:30:50 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

There's pickles on there, too.

01:30:52 **Amy Mauro**

Olives.

01:30:58 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I can't say any more than that. A better guy, I don't think.

01:31:00 **Amy Mauro**

All right. ...

01:31:08 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Like I said, when I got to the Big House, there were so many guys that were - they were salty. They were salty dogs, for sure, because they had been at that house for 20 years, and that house was - Not now, I guess, from what I hear. But that was the premier firehouse in the city, in my opinion.

01:31:35 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

So all those guys were just - so there wasn't any one person. But when I was a rookie, I would say like George Robey, Timmy Lancaster, my captain was Joe Herr, I was his rookie.

01:31:53 **Amy Mauro**

Heard a lot about him.

01:31:54 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah. Great guy. Great guy. Smart guy. But it was everyone in the house except for just some of the squad guys, they wouldn't even look at you, much less talk

01:32:11 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Or rescue you.

01:32:13 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

They would have done that. But they didn't like, you know, you didn't go in the sitting room unless you were making coffee or cleaning or something like that. That's just the way it. I mean, the probation there was completely different than it is now. And I know Matt had a tough probation, but by and large, that's gone by the wayside, a hard probation like that. But all the guys, for the most part, would not hesitate to, you know, drop knowledge on you. They would, because they wanted. That makes your company look good when your rookies know what they're doing.

01:32:59 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

You depend on each other to do the right thing.

01:33:02 **Amy Mauro**

And to you, that's the sign of a good leader is someone who's dropping that knowledge.

01:33:06 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

And yeah, I, I always tried to do that. Like I remember when I went to 14, I didn't really have to do it, at 10 because those guys were just. But there were some guys at 14 that they didn't really have good guidance, I would say. But they were good dudes. So I'd say especially there, I tried to return the favor of what the guys had done for me at the Big House, so I don't have a single guy. I don't know about that.

01:33:45 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

If I had to say. The first guy that comes to mind is my wagon driver, Dave Harris. He was like, he was saying, I disagree. My probation was very hard and stressful.

01:34:01 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

No, I said it was. I said yours was. Well, it was at a lot of houses. It's not now.

01:34:06 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Because of him. I had a true probation and it was, you know, he was always motivating me to do better and go above and beyond. And as a wagon driver, he's never put me in a bad spot, like in regards to where we're laying out and where the wagon is going to end up. And if there's a fire, it's just amazing to me how cool, calm and collected he is on every run like he's. I've never seen him lose his cool so that to me is like, I don't know, I want to be like that. I'm sure you know him, Captain Troxell.

01:34:59 **Amy Mauro**

Of course.

01:35:00 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

He's still there.

01:35:03 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

But he's kind of the same way. Like, he's much more outgoing and outspoken than Dave. But even at his age, since the moment I walked in the door, we were drilling. And he was always teaching you something. Every tour.

01:35:21 **Amy Mauro**

Yeah. He's a teacher.

01:35:22 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

He has so much knowledge. Smart guy.

01:35:26 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

So those guys are just like leading by example, you know, showing you the right way to be
And like you said, like it's not only on the fireground. It's just like in general life stuff.

01:35:42 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's a wonderful job.

01:35:46 **Amy Mauro**

And so another question for each of you, it's in two parts. So you may have covered some of
it already, but I would ask for lowlights from your career and highlights.

01:36:01 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's easy for me. My low I told you about.

01:36:07 **Amy Mauro**

That chief?

01:36:08 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah that was miserable. That was like years of misery.

01:36:15 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

This is the honest truth. I don't have lowlights right now, other than I wish I could go to more
fires.

01:36:21 **Amy Mauro**

You wish you could do what?

01:36:23 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Go to more fires. Get more experience because I'm like, it's not as frequent. So it's like I just
want more experience than I've gotten in that regard. But the highlight is just being at Engine
10 really.

01:36:46 **Amy Mauro**

Going to work every.

01:36:47 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I love it. Absolutely.

01:36:49 **Amy Mauro**

That's really a gift to love your job that much. And I loved being at the department too. It was definitely my favorite career experience.

01:37:08 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

My lowlight was when I got transferred to 20 Engine.

01:37:15 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I knew that was coming. I mean, that's obvious.

01:37:20 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

But that that was only for ... I had already taken the promotion exam. So that's what eventually got me out of there. There was I actually, I stand corrected. Do you know Bill Mould? He was the deputy on my shift when all that. Well, actually, he came after. And after I had been up at 20 Engine for, like, six months. It wasn't long before I was going to get promoted, but, you know, I wanted to go back to 6 Engine, obviously, because he knew I had been wronged. So he was trying to work with me and I was like, well, I mean, I'm going to go back to 6 Engine. And they had already filled my spot, couldn't go because, you know, that house was full... they already had a lot of guys. So he got me to Truck 6 for like about maybe another 3 or 4 months before I got promoted so that I got out of there and then I got promoted.

01:38:34 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Highlight. I don't know, there was a lot of highlights. I would say the highlight was just my whole career. I was blessed to have been at good places. Other than that stint at 20 Engine and even 31 was good. And I'd say the highlight of my career was, even as a private and as an officer was all the technicians I worked with and how they made my job easy. You know, like you got your hand smacked. You just knew when you went to 10 Engine as a lieutenant, you're along for the ride because they're going to make you look good as long as you're not an ahole, you know? Yeah, as long as you're a good dude. So that for me, that's the highlight. Like Matt was talking about David's wagon driver. Even at 31, I had a guy named Kyle Kendrick and you would think, oh God, I'm going to 31. This is going to be God awful. I mean, I'm going to get run wrong every time we get a box. And nope, this guy was squared away. Great guy. And everywhere I went as an officer and as a private, I had good people to work with. So it was a career highlight for me, I would say. Good job.

01:40:01 **Amy Mauro**

So in terms of tough times, we lost a lot of people in the late 90s. Were you at Engine 10 during that period?

01:40:08 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I was at 6.

01:40:09 **Amy Mauro**

You were at 6.

01:40:13 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I was a private. You mean Carter?

01:40:16 **Amy Mauro**

I was thinking of Carter and Cherry Road.

01:40:21 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

That was, if I'm not mistaken, that was one of those times when 6 was closed, I think.

01:40:29 **Amy Mauro**

That's right. One of the ladders, I think there was a truck out of service that day.

01:40:34 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Truck 13 was out of service.

01:40:36 **Amy Mauro**

So they had to wait for.

01:40:37 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Truck four came. ... I wasn't as close with Sauce and John Carter. John Carter had been up in the fifth for most of his time. I know he started out at Truck 17, but then he went to the fifth, so I didn't really know him that well. But I knew Lou Matthews really well. So that that hit me hard for sure. Because part of that Russian roulette thing with the firehouses, I'd be detailed at 26 a lot. And so he and I would ride the back step together, and he was just a great guy. What a great guy. Just so easygoing. You know, we always played - I grew up playing basketball and he played at Mackin, I think. So we'd always played basketball out back. They had a hoop out back and all that. He was just a great, great guy. I mean, you'd want your daughter to marry a guy like that. So. Yeah, that that was rough. 911 was rough at the Pentagon. You know, just seeing all those bodies.

01:41:57 **Amy Mauro**

Were you there that day? So you responded on the 11th?

01:42:01 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yes. I was in the second wave, the first box I had got off work that morning and they announced on the radio to turn around and go back to your assigned stations. That's when it was Plan E. Plan F. That was put in service for that for about three days, I think. So what they did after the initial box alarm went over there - Everybody reported back to their to their houses they were assigned to. And for me it was 8 Engine at the time. And, they brought metro buses by every battalion headquarters and loaded it up with guys and sent us all down to the Pentagon. This is probably like, I don't know, maybe an hour, maybe two hours after the plane had hit the Pentagon. So the majority of the fire was out when I got there. But they had us just going in there and doing what they call recon. You know, the military wouldn't let us touch any of the bodies. But we're basically putting out hotspots and searching. But the the majority of the fire had been put out at the time.

01:43:25 **Amy Mauro**

I guess I was under the impression it took longer. I didn't realize it was so fast.

01:43:29 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Well, well, thanks to DC being there, it was faster than it would have been, that's for sure. Because Jimmy Martin was in charge of that, and he was a well respected chief at the time. And they had, I guess, like a box alarm and task force was dispatched right away for that. And then, like I said, after that, we all came over on Metro buses, and they brought additional apparatus and everything over there for us. So I was there on the 11th and then the 12th, and then at that point, I guess they were scaling it down. So I went home.

01:44:12 **Amy Mauro**

Did they hold you over then for the second?

01:44:14 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah. We slept at 8 Engine after we went to the Pentagon. We got home. I don't know, you know, late in the evening, 2 or 3:00 in the morning or whatever. And then we went back. I went back at like 0700.

01:44:33 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I used to talk about fires. I'm retired, long retired now, but when I knew he had fires and I asked him about this one, he said, "dad, you don't want to know. I understood."

01:44:54 **Amy Mauro**

Any other incidents that that stand out? Are you hiding anything else? Because I almost left here without knowing you responded to the Pentagon, so we can't let that happen again. Any other incidents you want to share?

01:45:12 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

I know at 6:00 we had a bar set up.

01:45:16 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Oh no. The liquor store?

01:45:18 **Amy Mauro**

Statute of limitations is long expired. You had a bar set up. Was this part of your peer support after difficult incidents? That's changed. Okay, so I have two questions that I ask everyone I interview. And you can only answer one. So how does your time with the fire department continue to influence you today?

01:45:59 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

It's really a neat question. It's a great question. I'll have to get back to you.

01:46:08 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

If wordsmith over here can't think of an answer, what am I going to do? Well, for me. It's with this guy. Yeah, that's how it affects me. You know, he's still active, and I couldn't be prouder of this man over here. At what I think is the best engine company in the city. Doing his things and getting, you know, great reports from everybody that I worked with when I was there and just, throughout the department. That's how it affects me today, is having Matt carry on the tradition.

01:46:48 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Have you interviewed Mikey yet about the job, Mikey? He has a terrible, terrible responsibility to fulfill.

01:46:59 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

Captain Troxell already said it. You don't even. Just don't even. He already knows he's going to be the sixth generation. Don't even worry about it.

01:47:10 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I have to figure that out with his Spider-Man duties. That's all he does i s walk around doing Spider-Man.

01:47:17 **Amy Mauro**

We're talking about Matt's son.

01:47:23 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Shooting webs, yeah. I guess the thing that it could really try to answer is that it reinforced what I already knew about the goodness of people. And how you have no idea who that guy is going to turn out to be when he walks in the door. And that includes this door. Any door. You just don't know what's going on in people's hearts and minds until you until you face difficulties with them. And I don't mean not just on the background. I mean. In life you run

into people that seem might seem kind of cranky but they're carrying stuff that you don't know about. So I think it has helped me to be more patient and more understanding, compassionate, something like that.

01:48:23 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

For example, there's a quick story about Paul Shaffer. Okay. We had a good fire somewhere, and I don't even know where we were, but it was an apartment and we were cleaning up. The fire was good and we did a good job and all that. However, there on the sidewalk was this young, young mother with 2 or 3 little kids running around on her ankles. And obviously she didn't know what the hell she was going to do tonight with those kids. And the place was gone. And I watched Paul go in his pocket and pull out his wallet and walk over to her, and he didn't say anything. He just put whatever it was. I bet he was a \$50 bill because he was a roofer. He made a lot of money on the roof. He gave her some money, quietly squeezed her hand, and that's all he did. It really impressed me. I made a point of trying to be like that. He was a great man. He's still living, isn't he?

01:49:32 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah, as far as I know. His grandson was on my backstep at 10.

01:49:38 **Amy Mauro**

Well, I'll have to show you who I reached out to from that family.

01:49:44 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

He on the job? Paul Shafer.

01:49:50 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Oh, he's talking about because there's a Paulie, his son.

01:49:55 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

No, he was Dave Harris's officer for a while at 10.

01:50:00 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

I don't remember him being there, but.

01:50:01 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

He always talks about him.

01:50:05 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Paulie Shaffer was kind of my era. I want to say Paulie came on in, like, 87 or something like that.

Mayhew 2

00:00:00 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

You can stop doing the dishes now, Don. You have to come after me. You have to answer the last question. She promises, she keeps saying that. Is it on now?

00:00:12 **Amy Mauro**

It's on now. So the purpose of this website is to obviously celebrate the history of the department, but also to educate the public about the department. And so for someone who's coming onto this website and looking at it and learning the history, what's something that you want the public to know about the DC Fire Department?

00:00:36 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

As far as I'm concerned, how responsible the department is. I mean, we've been through hell with riots and people really trying hard to hurt us. And we never slacked off. Never. I mean, in my 20 years, there was never we didn't like it, but we kept showing up, kept putting out fires and following through traps that they would set. People would set for us and that didn't matter. I think we saved this whole city. We had three corridors on fire in 68. We had 14th Street, we had H Street, and we had 7th Street. And it never got off of those streets. None of the sidewalks. We saved the city.

00:01:28 **Amy Mauro**

I think that's important for people to know.

00:01:33 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

And we kept coming back, no matter how they treated us. That's my thought. And I'm sticking with it.

00:01:43 **Matthew Kane Mayhew**

I say just the whole tradition of the fire department and keeping that - how it's still being kept alive today. You know, even however many years. I can't do the math on top of my head from, you know, 59 to 2024. You know, it's somewhat the same way. We have much better apparatus and equipment and gear and masks and helmets and all that stuff. But the bare bones of firefighting and being that way still is the same.

00:02:22 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

You're right. It's the people.

00:02:28 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

Yeah. And 95% of them care and want to do a good job. I mean, just like any other job. There's a few bad apples, for sure, but, and once again, this could be because I had a charmed life with my career and where I was. But everywhere I was, which, you know, 14 some

people would say stuff about 14 and definitely 31. But even at those places, the guys cared, and I think everyone wants to do a good job. They want to do a good job. And so that would be the thing that I want people to know is that they care about the city, they care about the citizens, and that the majority of the people on the job really want to do a good job for the city and for the citizens.

00:03:30 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Amen, brother.

00:03:33 **Amy Mauro**

Anything else you want to share before we finish up, or do you think we've covered it?

00:03:40 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

How'd you like the killer tuna salad?

00:03:44 **Amy Mauro**

It was delicious. I liked the corned beef better. I got a real Irish corned beef sandwich. That's exciting.

00:03:50 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Okay. Damn. That's my killer tuna.

00:03:51 **Amy Mauro**

Thank you, though.

00:03:52 **Donald Neil Mayhew**

You probably weren't sure if Amy would eat corned beef.

00:04:01 **Donald McLean Mayhew**

Yeah, I wasn't sure.

00:04:02 **Amy Mauro**

He asked if I had any, food restrictions, and I said, no, I'm Italian. Alright, well, thank you. I'm going to turn this off.