

Harold Mace: Emeritus Director of Fire Protection Publications and Fire Service Training

Mr. Mace was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on May 23, 1939. He was raised on a farm in what is now the general area of the I-35/I-44 highway interchange in north Oklahoma City. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in Education from Central State University, now known as the University of Central Oklahoma. Upon graduating from college, he worked briefly in the insurance industry prior to becoming an elementary school teacher, and later was an elementary school principal in the Oklahoma City school system.

In 1969, he was hired as the Special Assistant to Dr. Monroe Kriegel, Director of Extension in the College of Engineering at OSU. He was also assigned to serve as the Acting Supervisor of Oklahoma Fire Service Training (FST), which was housed in the Engineering Extension program. His outstanding leadership and administrative skills enabled him to develop FST into a robust modern training program in a relatively short period of time. Under his leadership, FST's staff and budget expanded considerably. He was responsible for the initial construction of FST's first full-scale practical training facility located west of Stillwater. FST also became an accredited training organization during Mr. Mace's tenure.

Realizing the extraordinary leadership ability that Mr. Mace possessed, Dr. Kriegel would soon also place him in charge of Fire Protection Publications (FPP), publisher for the textbooks developed by the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA). Both IFSTA and Fire Protection Publications experienced enormous growth under Mace's leadership. During his tenure, IFSTA formalized its organizational status and initiated an Executive Board to oversee its operations. The IFSTA validation conference grew to the point that it had to be made an "invitation-only" event in order to maintain its manageability.

Under Mr. Mace's leadership, Fire Protection Publications grew from a small handful of employees with less than \$100,000 per year in sales to a modern, professional publishing organization with more than 40 employees and \$5 million dollars in annual sales at the time of his retirement. In his last years, Mace set into motion actions that would result in FPP nearly doubling its staff and sales in the years following his retirement. The FPP staff was housed in a Quonset hut on the OSU campus when Mr. Mace took over leadership of the department. In 1976, it moved to a new facility that was shared with the Fire Service Training program. In ensuing years Harold would lead the construction of a warehouse/shipping facility as well as the modern two-story office building that continues to house the FPP operation today. Because of Mace's leadership IFSTA/FPP grew to be and remains the world's largest publisher of fire training materials.

In January 1986, Mr. Mace was charged with heading yet another OSU fire program that was in serious need of effective leadership and management. Engineering Dean Dr. Kenneth McCollum appointed Mr. Mace as Department Head of the School of Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology, in addition to his duties as Director of FPP and FST. This legendary academic Bachelor's Degree program, which dates back to 1937, produced many of the nation's top leaders in both the industrial and municipal fire protection fields. However, it was struggling with ineffective leadership and declining enrollment at the time Mr. Mace was appointed. Under his leadership the school increased its enrollment from 60 to nearly 200 students within three years of his appointment. Under his leadership they also added faculty members, instituted an Advisory Board, and enjoyed a large growth in alumni support and financial donations.

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Just prior to his retirement in January 1992, Mr. Mace also initiated the formation of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). Building on the framework he developed, IFSAC would become the largest fire service accreditation program in the world, accrediting both certificate and degree programs.

While Mr. Mace's impact on the fire programs at OSU was immediate and unprecedented, his contributions to the fire service were not limited to the programs housed at the university. Harold Mace became a dynamic leader of the fire service on the national level from the very beginning of his career at Oklahoma State University. He was instrumental in the formation and operation of the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations (JCNFSO) and the National Professional Qualifications Board (ProBoard). He was actively involved in the Joint Council's development of a national professional qualifications standards and certification system. And most notably in 1972, he was named Chairman of the National Fire Protection Association's first Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications Committee. This committee developed the first editions of what are known as the NFPA 1001 (Fire Fighter), 1002 (Apparatus Driver/Operator), and 1003 (Airport Fire Fighter) professional qualifications standards.

Mr. Mace made renowned contributions to the professional qualifications movement. He was an educator. His academic credentials and work history were not as a firefighter or a fire chief – he was a teacher and while other fire service leaders understood the fire service needed to be professionalized, Mr. Mace knew how to do it. He knew how to analyze the knowledge and skills needed to be a firefighter and write learning objectives that would standardize training across the fire service. Those objectives were the precursor to the job performance requirements (JPRs) in the standards used today to train the fire service community here and around the globe. He was the catalyst that brought the fire service standards into reality because he first was a teacher.

The standards were published and then the JCNFSO's Pro Board began the task of national certification – how to assess that each firefighter had achieved the knowledge and skills specified in the standard. The knowledge could be measured with a written examination, but fire service training leaders predicted that documenting skills could not be done. Three states were the first to try certifying firefighters, Iowa, Oregon and Oklahoma. The first firefighter skills exam for national certification was in Midwest City, Oklahoma. With Harold leading the way, and the nation's fire service watching, firefighter skills were demonstrated and assessed and firefighter national certification program would include both knowledge and skills testing.

The third significant impact was his insistence was that paid and volunteer firefighters could be part of the same national certification system. The very first volunteer firefighters to achieve national certification to NFPA 1001, 1974 Edition were the members of the Alex (OK) Volunteer Fire Department. Today, all firefighters across our country are certified in the same national certification systems, to the same national standards, because Harold Mace insisted on it and then demonstrated that paid and volunteer firefighters did not require separate certification standards or systems.

He had vision. He was a leader, but beyond that he had the ability to identify and seize the thorny issue upon which success stood in the balance. He then, time after time, tackled and identified the solutions to the issues which were key to our nation's fire service moving into the future. That is his legacy.

In addition to the incredible list of professional accomplishments listed above, perhaps Mr. Mace's greatest achievements are as mentor to several generations of national fire service leaders. His influence on the many students and employees who have passed through the OSU system during his

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tenure, as well as the numerous IFSTA participants and other fire service members with whom he interacted continues to be reflected in their leadership of the fire service today. He instilled a sense of honor, values, and stewardship in everyone he mentored and worked with. Though it's been more than two decades since his retirement, his philosophies and examples of leadership are still frequently cited in many fire service circles and he remains an icon in the Oklahoma and national fire services. He was clearly a leader in what can easily be referred to as the fire service's "greatest generation."

His influence is reflected in the modernization of Oklahoma Fire Service Training, the enormous success and fire service industry influence of IFSTA/Fire Protection Publications, the renaissance of the OSU School of Fire Protection and Safety Technology, and the creation of the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress. On the national level, he was a pioneer in the development of the Joint Council, ProBoard and the NFPA professional qualifications standards and was a major figure in national fire service politics. His sage advice is still sought by OSU and national fire service figures to this day.

Mr. Mace (#50) was inducted into the Hall of Legends, Legacies and Leaders: Class 2017.

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