

Jimmy Shands Promoted To Relief Captain Position

By Jayne Strong
Post Staff Writer

In his latest career move, James "Jimmy" Shands has been promoted to the position of Relief Captain of the Charlotte Fire Department. Call it Captain Shands latest move because this progressive firefighter assures, for him, there's still room for advancement.

It was in 1980 that Shands joined the Fire Department as a basic firefighter. At that time, he recalls, "I sat down and made a five-year plan to become a captain. I began attending seminars and schools and taking on extra training to help prepare for the promotion." In 1982, Shands became a firefighter II. Then within his self-designated schedule he was promoted to Captain this year.

In his position 31-year-old Shands agrees that as far as with firefighting and other emergency situations in his domain, at the Fire Department Headquarter Station No. 1, the buck stops with him. As one of four relief captains, he's responsible for the firetruck, and personnel. He is the commander at incidents he responds to: analyzing the situation and making decisions. Overall it is a job Shands proudly describes as "challenging, educational and always changing."

It has its dangers also. An ordeal at a "hot, intense fire" resulted with the firefighter sustaining 2nd and 3rd degree burns to his face. It was an experience which "tested my inner self," Shands says. In rehabilitation, he remembers, "I didn't know what my reaction would be at the next fire." Yet when the time came, Shands says there was not hesitation for him to go into another burning house. This time he had only seconds to remember to protect his face before going in.

He says it's his earlier working experiences which taught him to "handle stress, strain and emotional situations in stride." From the age of 12 until graduating from high school, Shands worked at Alexander Funeral Home. "The late Kelly Alexander was very inspirational to me. He taught me how to deal with people and adversities," Shands tells. Though it was his first ambition to be a mortician, Shands says he became "disinterested" by the time he graduated high school.

With the knowledge that "blood didn't bother me," Shands became an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) in 1978. He worked with the Mecklenburg County Ambulance Service for two and one half years before it became Medic. Within this time, Shands became a Senior Crew Chief.

During this time, 1980, the Fire Department moved into the Emergency Medical field. So Shands, already in the emergency field decided to move into the Fire Department. "I knew my training would be an asset," he points out.

Overcoming his initial anxiety over heights, Shands took to the Fire Department with aplomb. He first worked at Tuckasee Station No. 5, one of the busiest stations in the city. "We call it Fort Apache," says Shands. "Anything you learn in training you get a chance to do at Station No. 5."

By 1983 he initiated and coordinated the CPR program for the Fire Department, through which he certified approximately 1,000 people through CPR classes.

It was all up hill from there. In 1984, Shands received the Outstanding Young Firefighter of America Award from the local Jaycees. Also that year, he was the recipient of the Meritorious Service Award for outstanding contribution beyond the call of duty in the community and the Outstanding Service Award, both from the American Heart Association.

Shands says his success with the Fire Department comes from "never losing enthusiasm," two role models, Major Jones, of the Charlotte Police Department and Chief Everett, of the Park Rangers, ("They saw my ambitions and helped keep my mind on an even keel") and of course, his on verve.

"I'm a self-motivated person. I've always tried to excel. I enjoy meeting people and giving back to the community what I've learned. I'm

Human Services

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee will conduct a survey in January to identify and catalogue all local human service programs sponsored by churches and other religious organizations.

A directory of human service programs is scheduled to be published in spring 1986. The directory will enable citizens to determine the extent of church involvement in serving local community needs. It will also allow the service groups to see what additional services are needed which can be provided by the private sector.

The Community Relations Committee is a group of 60 people appointed jointly by the mayor and chairperson of the County Commission.



JAMES "JIMMY" SHANDS
...Finds position "challenging"

not going to stop here, I'm going to continue on," the Captain promises. Shands is taking courses at CPCC for a Fire Protection degree and his next five-year plan is to become a Battalion Chief.

Perhaps too modestly, Shands does not consider himself a role model. "My father, who's a wise man, taught me not to ever think of myself as better than anyone," he reveals. He describes the elder Shands, 79-years-old, as a "low-key VIP. He's a 19th District Deputy of

the Masons," Shands acknowledges. Nevertheless, Shands likes wearing the many different hats of his profession. He is, additionally, an Emergency Medical Technician Examiner and Instructor, a N.C. State Fire Services Instructor, a member of the Interstate Association of Arson Investigators, member of the American Heart Association Work Group and the Delegate Assembly, member of the N.C. Society of Fire Service Instructors and also a National Fire Academy Arson De-

tection Instructor. "I don't know if it means anything, but I was just asked by the chief of operations if I'd like the position of Training Officer of the Training Academy," Shands smiles. "As the head training officer you're over 600 and something people," he excitedly explains. "He told me to smoke over it." But there's little doubt that Shands needs anytime to "smoke over" another career advancement.

Mission Air To Honor Kays Gary

Kays Gary, former Charlotte Observer columnist, will be honored for his humanitarian service by Mission Air Ministries at a January 11 dinner in the Adam's Mark Hotel here.

"Kays has helped hundreds of organizations, including Mission Air, and thousands of people during a lifetime of service," said Donnie Simpson, president of Mission Air Ministries.

"As a tribute to him, we are establishing the Kays Gary Humanitarian Service Award which will be given annually to someone who, in the tradition of Kays, has given outstanding service to fellow citizens," Simpson said. "The first award will go to Kays."

When he was writing his daily column, Gary often wrote about Mission Air, which he described as "mercy fliers." Mission Air is a non-profit organization of volunteers, including pilots and mechanics, who provide benevolent air

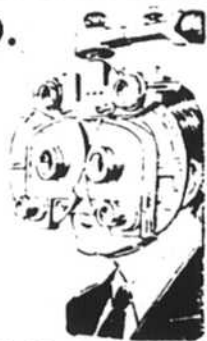


Kays Gary
...Famed columnist

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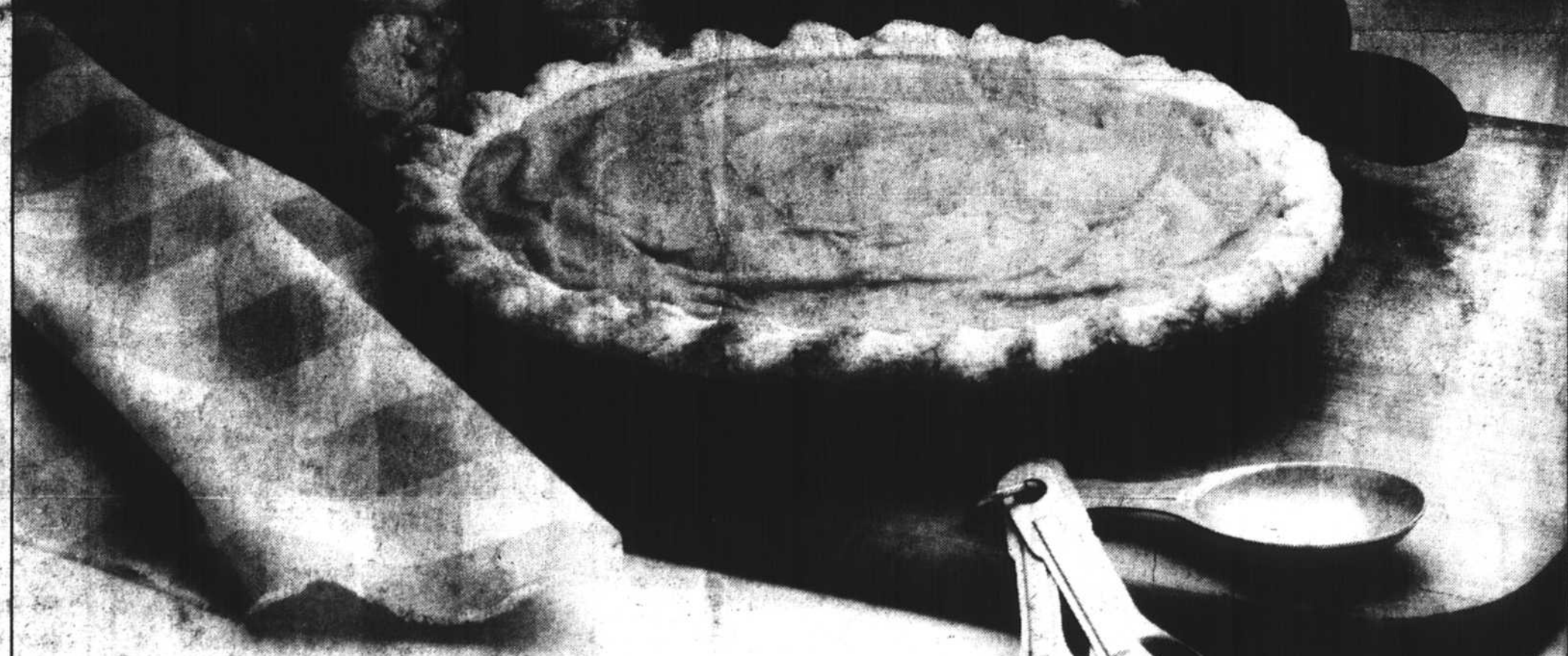
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