

Firefighter douses second career at 66

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could. During that time, he applied for the firefighter job after seeing an ad for the position. He eventually went to work for Southern National Bank (later a part of BB&T), as a lead operator, sorting checks, even though he had not seen a check sorting machine prior to coming to the bank.

"All I needed was an opportunity," Bailey said. "If you open a door, you don't have to tell me to come in, I'll walk in."

While at Southern National, Bailey received a phone call in reference to his application he had submitted to the fire department. It had been five years since he had submitted his application.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was investigating age discrimination at the fire department, and was reviewing the applications of those over the age of 35 who had applied for firefighter positions. Bailey was 42 at the time he applied, and the cutoff age was 35. By the time he was called about the application, he was 47.

Bailey decided he was going to give firefighting a

try. "I had good genes. I've been in excellent physical condition all my life," he said, which he attributed to his upbringing on a farm, as well as his experience as a paratrooper for the U.S. Army while serving in Vietnam. He was the oldest person to complete the fire academy training program.

"When we graduated, I was leading the pack in running," Bailey said. He joined Station No. 14, near the intersection of Sharon Amity Road and Randolph Road, and after receiving satisfactory ratings in performance for one year, the age restriction was lifted, allowing anyone who can meet the physical requirements of the job to be qualified as a firefighter. Bailey demonstrated his physical prowess further by participating in the North Carolina Police and Fire Games, winning 12 gold and three silver medals in track and field events.

Bailey reflected on his years as a firefighter one recent rainy afternoon, after going on three calls during the first five hours of a 24-hour shift.

"I enjoy doing what I do because I met some nice peo-

ple. I've been able to minister to them," said Bailey, an ordained minister. "I look at my time here as a success. Age is not a determining factor." Bailey said he has encouraged others to become firefighters, and has even acted as spokesperson for the fire department in the chief's absence. He believes it is an excellent career for a person who is not going to college, and a way to get an education even for those who are college-bound.

"You don't look for a pat on the back. You've gotta want to do the job, because you don't always get thanks for the things you do."

Shortly after, a woman visited the station with cookies and other holiday treats, as a show of appreciation to the fire station for rescuing her cat. Bailey smiled and said, "This is what I'm going to miss."

Bailey talked about his sharecropper father, who despite having a second-grade education, opened his own business. "Everything he said, I listened to," Bailey said. "There is nothing but success. I don't know any other way."

For Captain Jim Rudisill,



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Carl Bailey, who retired from the Charlotte Fire Department this week, is turning to his third career as an entrepreneur. He owns an office services company.

officer-in-charge at Station No. 14, Bailey is one of a kind. "I would like to have 10 more like him," Rudisill said. "No matter what assignment he was given, he did his job with no complaints, which made my job a whole lot easier." He referred to Bailey's work in the community in his spare time, and said, "We can't go anywhere without meeting

someone who knows Carl or who has been affected by him."

Bailey says he will continue to be active. He will continue to operate his business, Bailey's Office Service, for his client, Wachovia, teach Sunday School and serve on the deacon board at his church, Ebenezer Baptist. He will maintain contact with his firefighting

colleagues while serving as associate chaplain for the Christian Fire Fighters Association. The father of three and grandfather of two also said the year 2006 is already full because he will be "spoiling my grandchildren."

"I've done what I came to do," Bailey said. "Now it's time to sit back and enjoy."

Raleigh leaders are joining forces to preserve and renovate St. Agnes Hospital



PHOTO/ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE

Community rallies to save hospital

By Cynthia Dean
THE TRIANGLE TRIBUNE

RALEIGH - Members of a board organized to restore an old hospital building on the campus of Saint Augustine's College plan to preserve history as well as make history with the project.

In October, a special committee was formed to look into refurbishing St. Agnes Hospital on Oakwood Street. Dr. Charles Cook of Raleigh became interested in the building when he first came to North Carolina and was introduced to the college in the 1980s.

Cook refers to St. Agnes Hospital as one of

the "treasures of the community."

After receiving professional training in Boston, with a focus in hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases, Cook wrote a project to work with St. Aug's nurses and other allied health programs.

"The hospital was of particular interest to me," he said.

Cook is not interested in refurbishing an old building just for the sake of preserving history. He wants it to be used as a means to serve the African-American community in southeast Raleigh.

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New Hanover County



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