

RJ Reynolds
Tobacco Company

RECOGNIZES

John Gist

AS

*Public Safety Officer
of the Year*

IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE

In July, John Gist became Winston-Salem's third African-American fire chief.

"I don't feel the focus will be on me because I am African American," he says. "I do feel that they will be watching because I am a native."

Gist attended East Forsyth High School and Winston-Salem State University. He holds a B.S. degree in health and physical education and earned a certificate in municipal administration from the Institute of Government at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He also graduated from the executive officer's program at the National Fire Academy.

He joined the fire department in 1977 and rose through the ranks. His previous job titles trace his ascent: fire fighter, engineer, captain, administrative assistant, battalion chief, district fire chief, deputy fire chief, and, finally, fire chief.

He always knew that he wanted to be fire chief in some city; he just wasn't certain it would be in his hometown.

Throughout his career, Gist has not only shown leadership but also bravery. He received a commendation for rescuing a citizen from a burning building. He also became the youngest chief officer in the

local department and one of the youngest in the state. He also served on the Oral Review Board for selection of Winston-Salem's public safety officers.

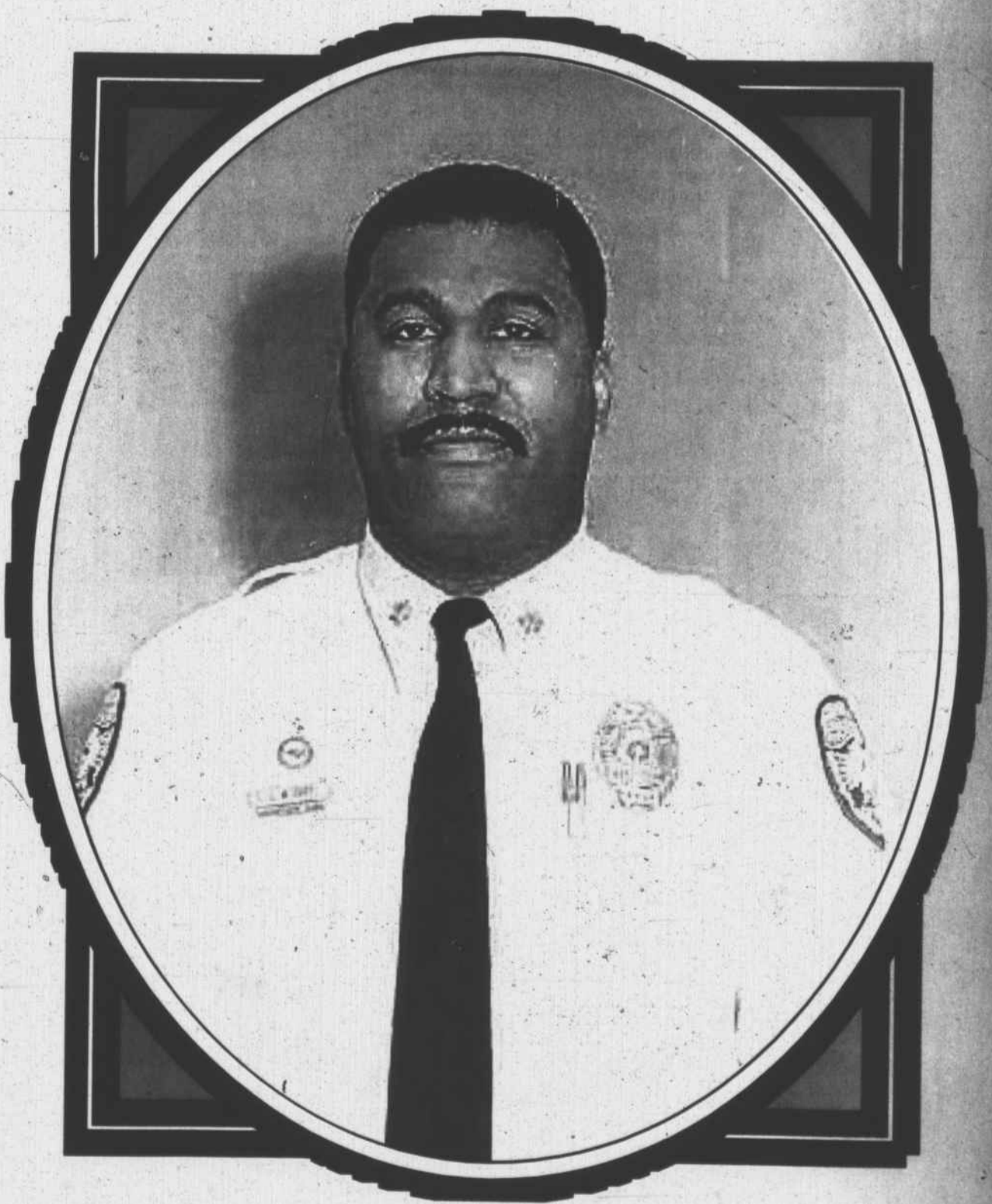
His priorities as chief include automation, manpower, and keeping pace with population growth. New technology, he says, will not only help fire fighters respond more efficiently and effectively but will allow the department to communicate with the community via the Internet. These initiatives will carry the department into the 21st century.

Over the years, Gist has gained a reputation for introducing innovations. He redesigned the department's physical agility test and developed an identification system to facilitate rapid recognition of vehicles. He also developed the fire officer's training curriculum, the department's customer service questionnaire, the Vacant Building Security Program, and the department's TEAM concept (Teams of Employees Assisting Management).

Gist is a Mason and a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

He welcomes the challenge of heading the 266-person Fire Department.

"People who have visions of success put them in place early," says Gist. "This was my vision."



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