

SCOTIA

Hundreds gather for fire victim

Family, friends recall former sergeant's life

BY MATT VOLKE *Gazette Reporter*

Grief marked the faces of friends and family Friday morning at the funeral service for Richard Fyvie.

But the photos along the walls of smiling grandchildren with their "Papa" and friends with "Dick" showed they were there to celebrate life as much as to mourn its passing.

Fyvie, 65, who retired with the rank of sergeant from the Scotia Police Department, was remembered by hundreds at the Glenville Funeral home.

"In many ways, we're here to thank God," said the Rev. Jay Richmond, pastor of First Baptist Church of Scotia. "When we think about Dick Fyvie, we think about what a wonderful gift God gave us."

Fyvie died Sunday morning in a fire at his house on Deerfield Place in Scotia. The fire is believed to have been accidental, authorities have said, and Fyvie succumbed to smoke inhalation.

Fyvie's body was badly burned and police are still waiting for final DNA identification. His coffin was closed at Friday's service, with an American flag draped over it.

Around the room, pictures were hung with flowers, and one large arrangement spelled out "Red Sox," his beloved baseball team. Fyvie was an avid baseball and Washington Redskins fan, and was president of the United Umpires of Schenectady, which officiated at Babe Ruth and Little League games.

Shaun Fyvie, his son, spoke at the service. He said he will remember the things his father taught him: unconditional love, fairness, laughter and a love for the Boston Red Sox.

"He was always there when I needed some words of wisdom or just a hug," Fyvie said.

He shared stories about his father's sense of humor, like the time his father asked him to get him a glass of milk, only to find his picture had been pasted on the side of the carton. He also talked about his dad speeding to his baseball games in his police car, lights flashing, to get there on time.

"I will miss being able to call Dad from a Redskins game right after they score a touchdown so he could hear the roar of the crowd," he said. "But I'm at peace to know he's in a better place."

John Mara of Rotterdam remembered Fyvie as an umpire. Mara said he later coached his son when Fyvie was umpiring, and he later recruited Mara to umpire. On Friday, Mara wore Fyvie's number 55 jersey, which Fyvie gave to him.

"I had no money for jerseys, so he gave me all his old ones," Mara said. "His number is going to be retired after today."

Dave Bean of Niskayuna, another friend from umpiring, said Fyvie organized the group's annual golf outing. In the past, other umpires wanted to name the event after him but Fyvie didn't want them to make the fuss.

"He never would let us, but he can't tell us 'no' anymore," Bean joked. "You can see by how many people turned out how loved and respected he was. He made you feel like his best friend. He always had time for you."

POLICE CAREER

Fyvie worked for 32 years as a Scotia police officer, serving as sergeant and lead investigator when he retired 10 years ago. After retirement, he worked at the Schenectady County Job Training Agency as a security officer for eight years.

The entire 13-member Scotia Police Department was in attendance. Glenville police covered the village so Scotia's force could attend the service.

Officers made their way to Fyvie's coffin one by one, saluting.

Sgt. Daniel Thouin spoke on behalf of the department, and read messages from other family members. Thouin paused several times to gain composure as he talked about Fyvie as a person and a police officer.

"It's been a long week for the Scotia Police Department," he said. "Watch over us and our fellow officers."

The long procession stretched for blocks, passing the Scotia Police Department headquarters on the way to St. Anthony's Cemetery for his burial.

Terry Borawski, a close friend who met Fyvie daily for coffee and bowled and golfed with him, said Fyvie was a good-humored man with whom he loved to spend time.

"His joke was, 'Everybody was a wanna-be Fyvie,' " Borawski said, pausing to cry and to laugh. "He said one day, 'Terry's not a wanna-be anymore. He's a Fyvie.' We just did everything together. There's nobody that's going to replace him. Nobody."

Rick Scepkowski pulled a golf ball out of his pocket with the inscription "5-V." It was given to him by the family at a golf outing. The two were long-time friends.

"That means you're a Fyvie," Scepkowski said, pointing to the ball. "He was my savior, my mentor, my best friend. We're going to miss him."



HANS PENNINK/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER Sgt. Thomas Rush of the Scotia Police Department reflects on his friend and former colleague, Richard Fyvie, at Fyvie's burial service Friday in St. Anthony's Cemetery in Glenville.



HANS PENNINK/GAZETTE PHOTOGRAPHER

Lisa and Shaun Fyvie bid farewell to his father, Richard Fyvie, following his graveside service at St. Anthony's Cemetery in Glenville on Friday. Richard Fyvie, a former sergeant with the Scotia Police Department, died in a fire at his home.