

## Media Release

For Immediate Release

February 6, 2010

---

### **Whitby Fire Captain to be honored with Firefighter Funeral.**

Town of Whitby flags fly at half staff in respect of the recent passing of a valued and long serving member of the community's local fire department.

Whitby Professional Firefighters Association IAFF 2036 and Whitby Fire and Emergency Services announce with deep sadness the passing of Whitby Fire Captain Michael Hutchings. Captain Hutchings passed away on the morning of Friday February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 after a courageous battle with cancer. He served the residents of Whitby for 26 years and was 11 months from his retirement.

Mike joined Whitby Fire and Emergency Services on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1980 as a Volunteer Firefighter. In 1984 he joined the full-time ranks of the department as a Dispatcher before moving to the Fire Suppression Division in 1987. On January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002 Mike was promoted to the position of Captain, a position he proudly held until his death.

Whitby Professional Firefighters President Mike Pfeiffer states "Sadly the Whitby Professional Fire Fighters Association has lost a brother. Michael Hutchings passed away after a 10 month valiant battle with cancer, a disease that has tragically affected so many. Mike has been a member of our association since 1984 and has been an active in all of our activities. Most significantly Mike has worked tirelessly as our advocate in the research and specifications of our emergency vehicles and equipment. It was this passion and experience with large trucks that resulted in many of the safety features found on our front line emergency vehicles today. For 26 years Mike has dedicated his life to the residents of the Town of Whitby and the safety of all the firefighters he has worked with. Mike Hutchings will never be forgotten and will always be a part of our family."

Whitby Fire and Emergency Services Fire Chief Michael Gerrard reiterates the accolades for Captain Hutchings contributions to the community; "Mike was a passionate Firefighter and Captain who was interested in getting the best apparatus and equipment for the community, the department and his fellow firefighters. He played an intricate role in strategic equipment planning that still resonates in our department today. Mike was the first member of WFES to pass away while still on active duty with our department. We have lost a valuable member who will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by all of us that worked with him. Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife Leslie and his children Julie, Callie, Parker, Logan and Abigail".

Mike Hutchings was born and raised in the Town of Whitby, later moving to the community of Fenelon Falls where he resided with his family for over 20 years. Mike was also actively involved in this community, as a member of the Fire Services Committee for the Town of Kawartha Lakes. He is described by family and friends as a hard working, dedicated family man and a passionate firefighter. Mike Hutchings choose the career path of firefighting in order to be able to serve the community he was raised in.

A firefighter funeral will be held for Captain Michael Hutchings at Fenelon Falls United Church, 123 Colborne St Fenelon Falls on Tuesday February 9th, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. Visitation will take place at Jardine Funeral Home 8 Princes' W Fenelon Falls on Monday February 8th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Memorial donations can be made to Princess Margaret Hospital, Neuroendocrine Drug Development Program.

Contact:  
Shawna Coulter  
Public Education Officer, Whitby Fire and Emergency Services  
905 430-4300 ext: 5218

Immediately following the service, firefighters will escort the procession by marching to the Fenelon Falls Cemetary on Concession Road.