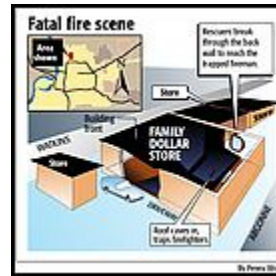




By Matthew Craig

Memphis Fire Department Director Chester Anderson speaks at a press conference Monday about the two firefighters' deaths.



## They were 2 typical firefighters

Zachary was 'always life of the party'

By Tracy Adams  
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He was a typical firefighter - tall and brawny with an anytime-anyplace-any-job attitude.

But Pvt. Charles Arnold Zachary of Station 31 wasn't just a typical firefighter.

Zachary was a man whose personality was "over the top," his brother says, who loved to play a good prank and who cooked a mean batch of Hamburger Helper.

Chuck, as his friends called him, wore a permanent grin.

"Chuck would put on a show when we (the family) got together, he was always the life of the party," said his mother, Nancy Zachary.

His wife, Frances, said her husband was a fun-loving practical joker who enjoyed cooking.

At home, Zachary often cooked Hamburger Helper, his favorite meal. He would add his own special ingredients "to give it a little kick," she said.

At the firehouse, Zachary didn't make the traditional three-alarm chili.

"He would make Rice Krispie treats for (fire chief) Stewart," she said. "That's the kind of guy he was, anything to put a smile on your face."

Of all the pranks Zachary played on fellow firefighters during his 19-year career, his wife said the "Kool-Aid one" stands out the most.

In what must have been a career-best prank, Zachary poured red Kool-Aid mix into the boots of a firefighter nicknamed Rip.

Then as Engine 31 was called to a fire, the firefighters all rushed to get their gear on and left for the fire.

When they returned and undressed, Rip discovered that his feet were "beet-red."

"I think his feet were red for two months," she said. "Chuck really loved that one."

From then on, she said, every time Zachary saw Rip, he asked about his red feet.

Besides his generous sense of humor, Zachary was also a gentle and loving family man, his brother said.

"If you were his friend he would lay it on the line for you," said William Zachary. "He had tons of friends and he loved being with his friends."

Zachary put his abundant energy into being a firefighter.

"Every effort he had went into the Fire Department," his mother said. "He lived it . . . ate it. He put his heart and soul into being a firefighter."

Zachary was an adoring husband and father, his wife said.

Late Sunday night and early Monday morning, before Zachary succumbed to his injuries, fellow firefighters crowded his hospital room and kept family members laughing with one funny Zachary prank story after another.

But beyond his silly side, there was a sweet man.

"I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with him when he gave me a little bitty ceramic bear," said his wife, who keeps it on her desk. "Chuck came across as a real hard-nosed guy, but he was really just a big ol' teddy bear . . . he was the sweetest guy and a better father than I could ever dream."

Zachary had two stepchildren, Sabrina, 25, and D. J., 21. His children never thought of Zachary as their stepfather, his wife said.

"When he married me he took on my kids and loved them just like they were his," she said. "He protected them and defended them and just loved them better than I had hoped."

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