

## **Kenneth Roy Charlebois**



Ken Charlebois was born July 21, 1946, to Violet Cameron and Thomas Charlebois, the tenth of 13 children. They grew up in the Overbrook area of Ottawa.

When Ken was 20 years old he joined the Canadian Navy. He was assigned to various ships as an Ordinary Seaman Engineering Mechanic. Ken was a worker who volunteered to help with stores party when it came to refitting the ships supplies, so got along very well with the cooking staff. When Ken decided to get married to Jeanette Roy, he left the Navy with an honourable discharge in October 1966.

Ken wanted to provide for his family so he returned to school. With diploma in hand, Ken joined the Ottawa Police force in March 1969.

As Constable on patrol, walking by the local Fire Hall one very cold night, knowing the fire fighters were warm in their beds, Ken, now with three children (Jamie, Joelle, and Alain) contemplated changing careers.

In 1976 Ken joined the Cumberland Fire Department. It was a rapidly growing community

and Ken felt like he was part of that growth. Ken loved the work and the opportunity to take on additional responsibility. He loved to mentor new Firefighters and the camaraderie of the Brotherhood/Sisterhood.

Ken retired in March 2004, with 35 years of accumulated Community Service.

Ken married Ingrid Koenig on July 1, 2006; Ken and Ingrid were inseparable, enjoying being together in their day-to-day activities and going on trips at the last minute.

In June 2006 Ken started the fight of his life against the diagnosis of esophageal cancer. Ken fought the disease because he was a fighter. For all these years he fought fires to protect the lives and property of the residents of the Ottawa area. He spent his career involved in the Association, fighting for better salary and benefits; for better protective equipment, for the health and safety of his fellow Firefighters. When Ken knew he was dying, he felt he'd be damned if he would quit the fight. Ken wrote "I am dying because I was a Firefighter (and I wouldn't change that for the world) and I was exposed to toxins and poisons on a regular basis. My fight now is to try and encourage all of my Brothers and Sisters to be tested annually in order to prevent what happened to me from happening to you."

Ken died on May 3, 2007, after learning his Brothers and Sisters would no longer have to battle WSIB for recognition of cancer-related illness developed from their job.

Ken left a legacy of love with his wife Ingrid and their families.

His other legacy is the

"HELP OTTAWA FIREFIGHTERS STAMP OUT CANCER" decals.