

2019-410



Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department

Chief David Castleman - Biography

Introduction

I am a lifelong resident of Jacksonville, although my fire service career began in the nearby Town of Orange Park Fire & Rescue Department in 1994. In 2000, I departed Orange Park to advance my professional career with the Jacksonville Fire & Rescue Department (JFRD). I have been a Florida certified paramedic for 25 years. During that span, I also worked as a critical care flight paramedic for TraumaOne Flight Service at UF-Health of Jacksonville – North Florida's only Level I Trauma Center. I earned my Bachelor's of Science degree in Fire Science Administration from Waldorf College in 2013 (Summa Cum Laude) and completed my graduate studies with academic honors at Anna Maria College in 2015, earning a Master of Public Administration.

Promotion Through the Ranks

I was blessed to move through the officer ranks of the JFRD relatively quickly as promotions go. I was promoted to Lieutenant in 2007, Captain in 2009, and District Chief in 2013, where I was certified as the top scoring candidate on the District Chief – Rescue Promotional Exam. As a District Chief, I directly supervised over 25 percent of the personnel assigned to the rescue division. In addition, I served as a liaison between hospital emergency departments, administrative staff, and rescue personnel. I also routinely performed command staff functions at major incidents throughout the city.

Opportunities to Serve

Early in my career, I had the distinct opportunity to serve in some unique roles with the JFRD. In 2004, I was appointed to a regional disaster strike team for Hurricane Ivan relief efforts in Panama City Beach and Navarre Beach, FL. In 2009 and again in 2011, I was one of three captains appointed to the EMS SOG Revision Committee. In 2010, I traveled to Charleston, SC on behalf of the JFRD to assist with the design/spec of Mass Casualty Incident Response trailers that were purchased through FEMA and DHS grants for the JFRD and surrounding regions. In 2016 and in the face of overwhelming opioid-related deaths in Jacksonville, CM Bill Gulliford introduced compelling legislation to help stop the dying. As the head of the JFRD Rescue Division, I was designated with contractual oversight of the newly created "Project Save Lives" Opioid epidemic pilot program. I have been integrally involved in the now widely recognized and successful PSL program for nearly three years.

Leading From the Front

During my four year tenure as the Chief of Rescue, I have led firmly from the front and been a part of unprecedented growth within the Division, thanks to a Mayor driven by his passion to public safety and the unified support of City Council. In three short years, the JFRD has added 15 new front-line ALS Rescue units and increased staffing to nearly 350 uniformed personnel within the Division. With over 87 percent of all JFRD calls for service being medical-related, the Rescue Division continues to be integral representatives of the JFRD mission, whose foundation is planted firmly in an unwavering commitment to quality customer service; compassion and professionalism in the face of one's crisis; and a unique passion for people in everything we do.