



TESTIMONIAL: CHIEF CHARLES PARENT, NEW ORLEANS FIRE DEPARTMENT



When Charles Parent began his higher educational studies, he had no idea of the public service career that would eventually become his life's pursuit. In the late 70s, Parent attended Xavier University with a focus on Marketing and Economics, and his subsequent employment choices ranged from the Coast Guard Reserve, which he served for seven years, to the phone company, for which he was a business systems server technician. As much as he enjoyed his work, Parent didn't recognize his true calling until he found inspiration in his older brother, a firefighter.

"I wanted to help people, but I also liked excitement," Parent said. "My brother, who is five years older and a firefighter, convinced me that joining the New Orleans Fire Department was the answer."

Following brother Randy Parent's lead, Charles Parent joined the NOFD in 1982 and never looked back. Over the next couple of decades, he rose steadily through the department ranks to become an operator and then quickly set his sights on achieving the rank of captain and, ultimately, fire chief.

According to mandated Orleans Parish regulations, pursuing his goal of becoming captain required Parent to attend core courses in Fire Protection Technology. Further, rising to the rank of fire chief involved sitting for a civil service exam, which necessitated his acquisition of an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Fire Technology. With these goals in mind, Parent began his studies at Delgado Community College, the only educational institute in Orleans Parish to offer the necessary certificate and degree courses.

While maintaining his job as an Orleans Parish firefighter, Parent attended Delgado and earned his Associate Degree of Fire Technology in 1986. His brother Randy also attended Delgado at the same time with the goal of rising to chief; today, Randy Parent serves as 4th District chief for the 3rd Platoon in New Orleans East.

"Attending Delgado helped bring my goals in line and lent me the focus on my career path that I needed at the time," said Chief Charles Parent. "I truly enjoyed my time at Delgado, and the educational support I received there was essential to my success."

With his degree in hand, by 1990 Charles Parent had advanced through the ranks of the NOFD to become captain. In 1995 he was named district chief, and in August of 2002 he rose to acting deputy chief. On February 26, 2003, Chief Parent was appointed the 10th superintendent of the NOFD.

Chief Parent has won numerous awards, including the 2006 Award of Distinction from the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association, the 2006 Metro Chief of the Year from the Black Chief Officers Committee Las Vegas, the Caretaker of Hurricane Katrina/Rita evacuees of New Orleans, La. and 2006 Drum Major for Justice from the SCLC Women's Organizational Movement for Equality Now.

Chief Charles Parent, Superintendent of the New Orleans Fire Department earned his Associate of Applied Sciences in Fire Technology Degree at Delgado Community College in 1986.