



**The 2022 Columbia County Volunteer Firefighters Association
Inaugural Lifetime Firefighter Achievement Award is presented to:**

Donald Dingman

MELLENVILLE

Mr. Dingman joined the ~~Fire~~ Fire Company in 1951. In 1951 Don was a senior in high school, while attending school, a large brush fire broke out. Calls to mutual aid departments served futile in controlling the stubborn fire in the rough terrain. A call was put out to the local high school students requesting their assistance. Mr. Dingman was one of the students to answer the call. He responded and carried the heavy metal 'Indian Tanks' up and down the rough terrain to help extinguish the fire, all before returning to school. A week before graduating high school, he joined the fire company as a member, never looking back!!

This call to volunteer didn't stop there. In 1953 he volunteered to serve our country, joining the military, where he served for several years before returning home to continue his service to our community. When Mr. Dingman returned, he opened a small general store and learned to become a butcher.

This leads to a story of community service and neighbors helping neighbors.....The founding thought of the volunteer fire service.... There once was large fire that broke out, Mr. Dingman locked the door the store and responded to help fight the fire. When he returned patrons wanted to know why he closed the store....His response is classic and is why our brotherhood and service continues to today..."What if it was your house". This is the true motto of the volunteer firefighter. We all set aside our personal time, profits and families for the betterment of other and the greater community's wellbeing.

Don has held numerous offices in the fire company and several associations. He has been a line officers, treasurer and trustee on the board of fire commissioners. Don is a 71 year life member of the fire company. He is a long time member of this great association as well as the HVFA and FASNY.

So in terms of a metric to measure a man's worth, we believe Don has checked all the boxes and most assuredly has become the standard by which others should be judged, in overall service to his family, his Fire Department, and community. By anyone's metric, Don's life work has been an exemplar of how one should walk through life; selflessly giving the vast majority of life serving the needs of others, while sacrificing his own.

To this day, he continues to selflessly serve as a seasoned veteran who is a master teacher and friend to all, no matter your station or rank. He has an arm's length resume dedicated exclusively to the fire service in addition to all his civic achievements.