





City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

R-26
Memorandum

Date: January 25, 2005
To:  Gerald R. Miller, City Manager
From:  David W. Ellis, Fire Chief
For: Bonnie Lowenthal, Housing and Neighborhoods Committee Chair
Subject: Naming of Long Beach Fire Museum in Honor of Herbert F. Bramley

This is a request for consideration of renaming the Long Beach Fire Department Museum to the "Herbert F. Bramley Long Beach Fire Department Museum."

On September 17, 2002, Councilwoman Laura Richardson submitted a request to rename the museum in Mr. Bramley's honor, which the Fire Department supports. The Councilwoman's request is attached for your reference and is summarized as follows:

- Mr. Bramley served the citizens of Long Beach as a Firefighter for 31 years and has been associated with the Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) for over 59 years.
- Mr. Bramley is the epitome of the LBFD Museum and was the impetus for the LBFD Museum and continues to spend countless hours and personal financial resources to search out and obtain unique and historical firefighting equipment. The Museum exhibits the legacy of firefighting history in the City.
- Mr. Bramley established the Firefighters' Fourth of July Circus and Fireworks Show, was a major contributor to the Mutual Benefit program, and served as an officer for the Long Beach Fireman's Credit Union for 50 years as a founding member.

As stated in Administrative Regulation #8.7:

City-owned land, building and facilities will not normally be named after living persons unless the City Council deems it appropriate to take such action on the basis of a significant contribution, monetary or otherwise, which warrants a deviation from this policy guideline.

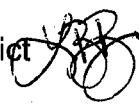
It is submitted that Mr. Bramley has made such "significant" contributions to the citizens of Long Beach, the Long Beach Fire Department, and to the Long Beach Fire Department Museum and is deserving of this honor.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 82505.

Attachment
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RECEIVED
CITY CLERK
LONG BEACH, CALIF.
02 SEP 19 PM 12:13

Date: September 17, 2002
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Councilwoman Laura Richardson-Batts, 6th District 
Subject: ITEM FOR THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2002 CITY COUNCIL AGENDA - Naming of City property

Herbert F. Bramely, or "Herb," a Long Beach local for the past 76 years, graduated from Jordan High School in 1940. He returned from flying B-25's in World War II to settle down in Long Beach. Keeping to his patriotic and public service mantra he signed on with the Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) in 1946. He spent 31 years serving the citizens of Long Beach as a Firefighter and has been associated with the LBFD for over 57 years. During this time Herb founded and contracted for the old Fireman's Clubhouse off of Pacific Avenue. He started the Fireman's Fourth of July Circus and Fireworks Show, currently held at Veterans Stadium, to prevent children from using illegal fireworks and harming themselves or starting fires. He was a major contributor to the Mutual Benefit program which aids LBFD Firefighters and their families when they become injured or sick. Herb served as General Manager of the Long Beach Fireman's Credit Union for 37 years and as Secretary-Treasurer for 13 years developing it into a sound financial establishment serving over 3,100 members.

Despite all this, perhaps Herb's biggest accomplishment is the LBFD Museum. This Museum would not exist except for Herb Bramley. He began accumulating equipment, memorabilia, and antique fire apparatus before there was even a place for storage. Herb has expended countless hours and over \$13,000 of personal financial resources to search out unique items and buy historic firefighting equipment. In 1961 he purchased a 1926 Ahrens Fox fire truck and an Amos Steamer Hose Wagon from a movie studio, which he personally restored. He found and purchased a 1935 Mack Squad Truck, originally used and owned by the LBFD. Later he convinced Larry Hagman, of TV's *Dallas* fame, to donate a 1924 Ahrens Fox Fire Truck which has been restored and fully functions, and is brought out to numerous community events for all to enjoy. He has personally gained or assisted in gathering countless other pieces currently displayed at the LBFD Museum including antique rope ladders, original safety tarps, personal gear and the like.

In 1980, there was talk of demolishing the old Fire Station #10 at 1445 Peterson Avenue. Herb lobbied and with support from the Long Beach Historical Society had the building declared a Long Beach Historic Landmark, preventing demolition. Thereafter he obtained permission from then Chief Leslie to convert Station #10 into the present day LBFD Museum, which was granted.

September 18, 2002

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Herbert F. Bramley is the Lbfd Museum. It exists solely on his original efforts as he has donated countless time, effort, and personal finances toward its success. He is the originator and the founding curator of the Lbfd Museum. The Lbfd Museum, member of the National Association of Fire Fighter Museums, has arguably has one of the largest and most diversified collections of fire fighting equipment based on Herb's efforts.

Herb has done all of this with no expectation of personal gain or acknowledgement. Anyone who knows Herb knows that he is a man of the highest integrity, character, and drive to make his community a better place without any desire for personal recognition in return.

On July 31, 2002 the Long Beach Retired Firefighter's Association met and unanimously decided to move forward in lobbying to name the Lbfd Museum after Herbert F. Bramley. They are joined by current Chief Terry Harbour, former Chief T. J. Rizzo ('68-'74), former Chief Robert E. Leslie ('76-'84), Long Beach Fireman's Credit Union President and CEO William Fickling, former 29 year Firefighter and Engineer Bob Eldridge, former Firefighter Tom Stewart, Long Beach Firefighter's Local 372, including President Bill Ardizzone, and countless other friends and supporters in naming the Lbfd Museum after Herbert F. Bramley.

While it is "not normal" to name City property after living individuals, Herb, now in his 80th year, clearly falls within the individuals who have made a "significant contribution" exception.

I am very supportive of this action. Therefore I respectfully request a proposal to name the Long Beach Fire Department Museum, located at 1445 Peterson Avenue, within the Sixth District, the "Herbert F. Bramley Long Beach Fire Department Museum."

Attached:

Letter from Chief Rizzo

Letter from Chief Leslie

Letter from LBFCU President William Fickling

Letter from Tom Stewart

Council Woman Laura Richardson Batts
333 West Ocean Blvd. 14th fl.
Long Beach, California
90802

In response to your request as to Herb Bramleys involvement in the Fire Department Museum. I would have to say, that without Herb efforts we would not have a Fire Department Museum. I have had a close working relationship with Herb for over forty years, I served over twenty years as a Board of Director on the Long Beach Fire Department Credit Union. I was also Fire Chief, for the Long Beach Fire Department for over eight years. In these positions, I had ample opportunities to follow Herb and his efforts to maintain and expand the Long Beach Fire Museum. His travels, (at his own expense) to locate, and purchase old fire apparatus for the Long Beach Fire Museum, was never ending. Herb is a real professional in the antique fire apparatus world. He knows it and loves it. This devotion is what made the Long Beach Fire Museum. No one else could have, or would have done that. He is one of a kind, He is the Long Beach Fire Museum.

Respectfully,


Robert E. Leslie

AUG. 7, 2002

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE MOVEMENT TO NAME THE LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT MUSEUM AFTER ITS FOUNDER, HERBERT BRAMLEY.

THIS HONOR TO HERB WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE AND DESERVED THANK-YOU FROM THE PEOPLE OF LONG BEACH, AND ESPECIALLY THE CHILDREN, FOR HIS EFFORTS TO CREATE A FIRE SERVICE MUSEUM.

HERB CONCEIVED THE IDEA FOR THE MUSEUM, PLANNED IT, AND LOBBIED THE CITY OF LONG BEACH TO ALLOW THE USE OF AN ABANDONED FIRE STATION TO HOUSE IT. HE RAISED FUNDS TO REMODEL THE STATION. HE ENCOURAGED OTHERS TO WORK WITH HIM ON THE PROJECT AND FORMED AN ORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS TO OBTAIN, ~~AND~~ RESTORE OLD FIRE APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT AND MAINTAIN THE ON-GOING OPERATION OF THE MUSEUM.

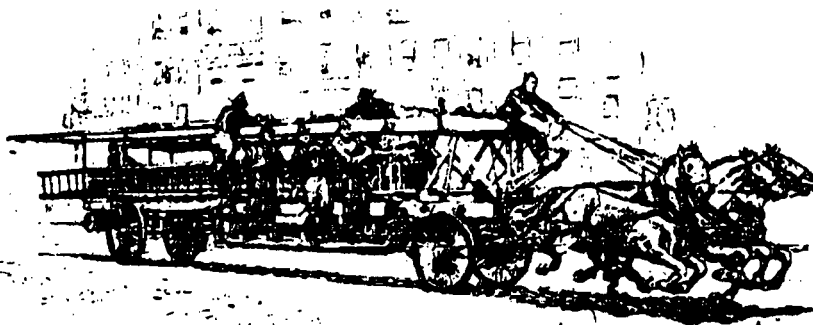
TO THOSE OF US WHO KNOW HERB, THIS EXAMPLE OF INITIATIVE, ENTERPRISE AND PERSISTENCE WAS NOT A SURPRISE. WHILE WORKING ON THE LONG BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT, HE TOOK OVER THE OPERATION OF ITS CREDIT UNION AND NURTURED IT FROM A SMALL, MOM AND POP OPERATION TO AN EXPANDED AND SUCCESSFUL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION. HE WORKED

TIRELESSLY TO BUILD A NEW CREDIT OFFICE BUILDING,
WITH UP-TO-DATE EQUIPMENT AND AN EXPANDED, CAPABLE
PROFESSIONAL STAFF.

I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THE LONG BEACH FIRE
DEPARTMENT, AND ITS RETIRED MEMBERS AND
FAMILIES JOIN ME IN PROMOTING THIS WELL-DESERVED
TRIBUTE TO OUR FRIEND HERB BRAMLEY.

T. J. Rizzo

RETIRED L.B.F.D. CHIEF



Long Beach Firemen's Credit Union

2245 ARGONNE AVENUE, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90815

(562) 597-0351

Sixth District Council Office, City of Long Beach
Councilwoman Laura Richardson-Batts
333 W. Ocean Blvd., 14th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

The purpose of this letter is to join with many of my friends and colleagues to recommend that the Long Beach Fire Department Museum be named after Herb Bramley, the founder and major driving force behind its existence.

Herb has been a friend, a colleague, a fellow firefighter and my mentor for over 25 years. He is a unique individual who possesses the highest integrity, boundless energy and an indomitable drive to create and complete projects that usually benefit others.

One of his numerous accomplishments was his 50 years of involvement in the Long Beach Firemen's Credit Union. He was a general manager for 37 years and spent the last 13 years of his service as the secretary-treasurer on the board of directors. During his time the C.U. grew from a small and simple financial co-operative that was run out of a one-desk office the size of a bathroom to a highly complex and successful C.U. serving past and present Long Beach Firefighters and their immediate family members. Currently the C. U. has over 100 million in assets and it serves 3100 members. I was very fortunate to work with Herb as a board member until 1986 when he recommended me to replace him as the general manager. He was an excellent and patient teacher and his most important lesson was that the members own the C.U. and all decisions are based on their needs and desires providing those decisions are safe and sound for the entire membership. The success that the C.U. enjoys today is directly related to Herb's philosophy and stewardship throughout the years. This is just one example of the impact Herb has made on people and projects that he has been involved with during his life.

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The Long Beach Fire Department museum would not exist had it not been for Herb's relentless efforts and vision. He began accumulating equipment, memorabilia and even antique fire apparatus years before the museum was officially recognized at old fire station # 10. In fact if he had not lobbied the city of Long Beach to use station 10 it would have most likely have been demolished. But due to his efforts, the city has a wonderful fire department museum where adults and children can visit and delight and marvel in the rich and fascinating history of the fire service and the Long Beach Fire Department in particular.

I hope this information will validate that Herb certainly deserves recognition for his efforts on behalf of the Long Beach Fire Department and the City of Long Beach.

Sincerely, *W H Fickling*

William H. Fickling, President/CEO

Tom Stewart
8024 Bynum Street
Long Beach, CA 90808

August 17, 2002

Sixth District Council Office, City of Long Beach
Councilwoman Laura Richardson-Batts
333 W. Ocean Blvd., 14th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Per your August 1, 2002, request I have contacted many of Herb's friends over the years as well as his family members. "What a life."

He has lived in Long Beach for 76 of his 80 years attending local schools and graduating from Jordan High School in 1940. He married his high school sweetheart, Wanda, and has just recently celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. Unfortunately, she is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He has 2 daughters, 3 grandchildren (2 are firefighters) and 3 great grandchildren.

He served in World War II as a pilot flying B-25's. Joined the Long Beach Fire Department as a contract firefighter in December of 1945. In 1947, he received word from the Board of Directors of the Firemen's Credit Union that he was voted in as a Manager and Secretary Treasurer serving over 50 years.

Herb also was the original member that started the Firemen's Fourth of July Circus.

He founded the firefighters clubhouse and was responsible for its financing and also subsequently its sale.

Past President of California Credit Union League.

Past President and Life member of the Model "T" Club.

While serving the department, he always had a desire of collecting fire memorabilia and in 1958 he purchased a 1914 Model "T" fire engine and in 1961 he was able to purchase the 1926 Ahrens Fox fire truck.

Also, in 1961 he was able to purchase from the movie studios, an Amos Steamer and Hose Wagon - which he restored. After that, many purchases were made including a 1935 Squad Truck originally owned by the Long Beach Fire Department.

In 1980, the Fire Department shop was moved out of Station 10 location because the building was going to be demolished. Herb approached Chief Leslie to use the building for a future museum and work shop and permission was granted. Volunteers were

gathered bringing their own tools, etc. to work on the rigs. Donated funds provided the success of their endeavors. Even selling aluminum cans acquired from the fire stations.

Herb has worked closely with the Long Beach Historical Society and subsequently, the building, was declared an historical landmark. This will eliminate, hopefully, any future talk of demolition of the building.

He was able to purchase a 1923 Seagrave Truck that was found in Jackson, California, in a chicken coop. Herb made a deal with the owner and was assisted by Long Beach Fire Memorial Committee funding and restored the Seagrave.

I can go on and on with regards to the acquisition ie: 1924 Ahrens Fox which Herb and his staff restored and was given to the Association by Larry Hagman, TV star.

He purchased many more "rigs" and equipment.

The City closed the Museum because it had to be retrofitted. Doris Topsy Elvord, City Councilwoman, was able to finance the operation using \$50,000 from her Discretionary Fund.

Also, Herb working with Betty Karnette, Alan Lowenthal and Jenny Oropeza was able to secure a \$50,000 grant for major reconstruction of the facility by trained, off duty and retired, firefighters only to be denied by Gov. Davis as funds were not available.

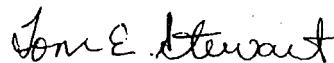
Herb has personally given in excess of \$13,000 of his own money, let alone his own equipment, tools and fire antique collections.

The group are members of The National Association of Fire Fighters Museums, a subsidiary of the U.S. Fire Chiefs Association. The museum is nationally recognized and they can't believe the amount of rolling stock they have been able to acquire. All has been made possible by volunteer workers.

Also, see attached letters of recommendations from retired Chiefs Rizzo and Leslie.

I appreciate your efforts on this long overdue project and more information will be forthcoming.

Best regards,



Tom E. Stewart

enclosure

August 21, 2001

Councilwoman Laura Richardson-Batts
Sixth District Council Office
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 14th Floor
Long Beach, Ca 90802

I am writing this letter to ask your support in dedicating the Long Beach Firefighter's Museum to retired firefighter Herb Bramley.

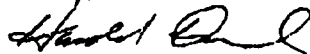
Herb has worked his entire career, both active and retired, in preserving the history of our Fire Department. This effort in many ways has preserved the history of our entire city for citizens to enjoy. Herb worked to secure old fire station 10 and the attached maintenance shop to serve as the museum's home. He has searched the entire nation to secure old Long Beach equipment and fire apparatus to bring to this museum. He has spent thousands of dollars of his own money in purchasing replacement parts and equipment to refurbish our antique fleet.

The City of Long Beach and its citizens have been the beneficiary of years and years of Herb's efforts. Each year thousands of school children and visitors from around the world visit our museum. They can witness first-hand the evolution of our city's Fire Service and the growth of the City of Long Beach. Our antique fire apparatus participate in events throughout the community and are always a top attraction for kids and adults alike.

Herb has organized a large group of active and retired firefighters to maintain, restore and volunteer their services to keep the museum a major attraction in our community.

Very few people dedicate their lives to preserve the history of their profession and their city. The dedication of this Long Beach Firefighter's Museum to fire fighter Herb Bramley would be a great tribute to him, his family and the Fire Service. I respectfully urge your support of this project.

Sincerely,



Harold Omel
Long Beach Fire Chief, Retired

August 26, 2002

Councilmember Laura Richardson-Batts

It is my understanding that discussions are taking place regarding the recognition of retired Fire Engineer Herbert Bramley and his contributions to the Long Beach Firefighters Museum on Peterson Ave.

I would like to be included in the list of those endorsing approval of this recognition.

As the Fire Chief of the City of Long Beach from 1984-1988, I personally witnessed the fine work Herb did as curator of the museum. Without the countless hours and monetary contributions, we would not have the notable collection of fire equipment or memorabilia. His love of the Department and the City certainly deserve to be brought to bear and rewarded.

Sincerely,

James B. Souders
JAMES B SOUDERS