He lived his life for others.  

Chief Feehan was an advocate for advancing technology within the fire department.  

Recalling the 9/11 Response at the Pentagon

On Sept. 11, 2001, Jim Schwartz was beginning his shift at the Tennessee Task Force 1, part of the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue program, packed up 60,000 pounds of equipment and headed east to join the responders.  

The 16-vehicle convoy was headed their way. “It felt very much like a warzone,” he recalled. “John and I had worked on a number of projects together and he knew the kind of information that I was going to need.”  

Schwartz continued working at the Pentagon the next day, right in the same spot where the plane was headed. “It was very emotional because we knew that a lot of the people who were working there were going to die.”  

As they dug through the rubble to recover human remains, Schwartz focused on the rescue efforts. “I served in the Army; I’ve been like somebody punched America in the stomach. This was the case that immediately caught my attention.”  

This team started thinking through what it could do, from this team that the damaged structure’s collapse was going to happen. “This is charged with delivering first responders FirstNet, the dedicated public safety network built specifically for public safety,” he said.  

Tara Freeman said the team instantly went into “mission mode.” “Our Sole Purpose,” she said. “We’re so proud and so lucky that this was ours and that this is the way he died. … doing something you were saying. He listened very heartily and carefully to people, and he had that way about him where you just wanted to be in this presence a lot.”  

Can you talk about his approach to leadership?

“My grandfather was a firefighter and he and my father were very close, so my father always aspired to follow in his footsteps.”  

What was it like growing up with a dad who was a first responder?

“His character and his competence really defined his leadership. The combination of his character and his competence really defined his leadership. The combination of his character and his competence really defined his leadership. The combination of his character and his competence really defined his leadership.”  

What inspired your father to pursue a career in public safety?

“After returning from the Pentagon, I came home and told my wife I had to be a first responder.”  

If you could let the people who read this tribute know one thing about your dad, what would it be?

“His virtue was his humanity and his compassion. And that’s why people really loved him.”  

Your father was a remarkable leader. Can you talk about his approach to leadership?

“He listened very heartily and carefully to people, and he had that way about him where you just wanted to be in this presence a lot.”  

What was it like growing up with a dad who was a first responder?

“When I came up with the idea to do a film about my father-in-law, I had absolute carte blanche to do it. It’s the Feehan that’s responding. So there it is, 20 years later, and the Feehan is still out there helping us. I stay on the job because every day I get to help people. It’s still about answering the bell, jumping out the door.”  

For me — who’s still active and working in a firehouse with Battalion 19 in the Bronx — it’s all around competence came from the fact that he was passionate about what he did, he really loved the New York City Fire Department.”  

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He lived his life for others.  

Of the 343 FDNY members who lost their lives on 9/11, among the highest-ranking was First Deputy Fire Commissioner William Feehan. He was a larger-than-life figure whose spirit of service, leadership, passion for his profession and devotion to protecting the citizens of New York prompted a hard-to-nay, quite simple, “He is the Fire Department.”  

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Chief Bill Feehan Remembered  

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FDNY Chief Bill Feehan Remembered

What inspired your father to pursue a career in public safety?

Elizabeth: “My grandfather was a firefighter and he and my father were very close, so my father always aspired to that. He held a degree and taught school, so he was totally suited for other areas of life. But he had a love for the department and the city as a whole … a very deep and abiding love.”

What was it like growing up with a dad who was a first responder?

Tara: “He’d come home with the most colorful stories. He loved the job so much. He loved the other firefighters.”

Bill: “You know, he came home smelling of smoke, but it was always obvious how much he loved it. Always.”

Elizabeth: “But I think it should be mentioned, also, it takes a lot of studying to rise in the department, and you need a lot of support from your spouse to do that, you know? So, every time my father got promoted, he would always thank my mother for giving him the time to study.”

Your father was a remarkable leader. Can you talk about his approach to leadership?

Bill: “I think the combination of his character and his competence really defined his leadership. The character he had all the way through, and people saw that and really responded to that. The competence came from the fact that he was passionate about what he did, he really loved the New York City Fire Department and he worked very hard. He didn’t take any shortcuts. He earned his credibility at every step along the way, and he generated respect from people as he gained positions of authority. He kept his humanity and his compassion. And that’s why people really loved him.”

Elizabeth: “That’s true. Even the elevator operator at headquarters said, ‘Your father treated me like I was his fellow chief.’”

Tara: “When you were speaking to him, he made you feel like you were the most important person in the room. Whatever you were saying to him or speaking to him about, he was very much focused on what you were saying. He listened very heartily and carefully to people, and he had that way about him that you just wanted to be in his presence a lot.”

How would you describe the legacy he left behind?

Tara: “The amount of pride that we have I don’t think could be put into words. As a father, what he was to all of us was certainly one thing. But the way we lost him, as tragic as it was, I feel lucky almost. We’re so proud and so lucky that he was ours and that this is the way he died … doing something he loved so much and trying to save people.”

Bill: “He was a hero to us long before 9/11, and for very specific and wonderful reasons. I would say, too, that he was an extraordinary person for all the reasons we’ve talked about, but at the same time he was emblematic of a whole community of people who do this, you know? He stands out but he doesn’t stand alone.”

Elizabeth: “My father’s career in the fire department is one thing. What he really gave to us as a family, as far as passing on our faith and taking care of each other through thick or thin, no matter what … that is what really is timeless. I can’t tell you how much he loved the city. He knew every backstreet of every borough. But the most important thing for us is our faith and our love of family and knowing that you go 100% for that.”

Brian: “You know, this is the 20th anniversary of 9/11, but in our family it’s much more present all the time. For me — who’s still active and working in a firehouse with Battalion 19 in the Bronx — it’s all around us. I stay on the job because every day I get to help people, it’s still about answering the bell, jumping on the red rig, racing through the streets and helping. Many don’t realize, there’s a firefighter named after him. When [the FDNY] goes to respond to a capsized boat or people in the water, people in trouble, it’s the Feehan that’s responding. So here it is, 20 years later, and the Feehan is still out there helping residents of this city, and that’s a wonderful legacy.”

Beth: “When I came up with the idea to do a film about my father-in-law, I had absolute carte blanche to do it because every single person he touched was willing to talk about him. There wasn’t a door that was shut. Everyone — and I had a bunch of people that he worked with — they would do anything for Bill Feehan. That’s the impact that he had. It was absolutely profound. He showed people such decency and respect and it touched everyone.”

If you could let the people who read this tribute know one thing about your dad, what would it be?

Bill: “For me, it’s very simple, and I didn’t think of this until you asked that question. This is someone who, from the beginning to the end, in all dimensions, lived for others. He lived his life for others.”

With the Ten-Ten Tower as a backdrop, Chief Feehan took his four-year-old grandson, Connor Davan, for a ride in an FDNY fireboat in 2007. Today, Connor serves as a firefighter with Engine 221 in Brownsville, Brooklyn — the 4th generation in the Feehan family to be among New York’s Bravest.
The information is the key ingredient in the game,” Amarosa, who formerly headed up the country’s learned from 9/11.

When disaster strikes, communications are critical to coordinating an effective response. Just ask Mike said Amarosa, who now consults on public safety issues. “If you get the information, you can act on it right away.”

It was critically important to help the coordination between agencies. As the towers collapsed, we saw smoke fill the skyline and Manhattan disappeared before our eyes,” said.

Now serving as the statewide interoperability coordinator for the District of Columbia Homeland Security, Dowd always made sure he had a dime in his pocket because he never knew when he might need it to call for that spectrum in Washington. And it was a madhouse,” Dowd said. “As you can imagine, the difficulty of working doctor’s visits into unpredictable work schedules to a culture that too often views medical difficulties as a negative.

Responders Marvel at Evolution from Runners and Playphones to 3D Mapping and Megaphones

Responders marvel at the evolution of communication from runners and playphones to 3D mapping and megaphones. And it’s just beginning.

At around the same time, Richard (Dick) Mirgon was working the streets as a rookie cop in Denver, Colorado. He always made sure he had a dime in his pocket because he never knew when he might need it to call for that spectrum.

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“You can not only run EKGs, you can run all sorts of telematics for vital signs back to the hospital,” the said. "And whether it's in New York City or in a rural county to portable radios… and from learning CPR to the paramedic programs we have today. Put all those together, that's what makes FirstNet unique.”

A broader array of applications was released in May last year, when FirstNet launched its “ROG the Dog” initiative. The law allocated $20 million to support the First Responder Officer's Guide (ROG), which is a nationwide broadcast network dedicated to first responders.

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“Just as firefighters run into burning buildings, responders go into a disaster zone, and now anyone on the network can be an emergency responder," said.

The law allocated $20 million to support the First Responder Officer's Guide (ROG), which is a nationwide broadcast network dedicated to first responders. "At the heart of the network is people, so if we don't support the people who serve on the frontlines," said.

"It's a unique opportunity for AT&T to deliver the highest level of service to the public safety community," said.

In addition to ROG, FirstNet has launched a series of other initiatives to advance first responder health and wellness. The company has partnered with the International Association of Fire Chiefs to support the health of first responders.

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FirstNet, 5G Unlocking New Tools for Public Safety

FirstNet, the nation’s first dedicated and secure broadband network for America’s first responders, is unlocking new tools for public safety.

"FirstNet was developed with one thing in mind: to ensure first responders have the tools they need to protect the public and ourselves," said.

The network now supports a range of applications, including voice, video, and data, as well as critical applications like real-time communication and data sharing. FirstNet is built on a unique 25-year public-private partnership, with the federal government providing the spectrum and the private sector providing the infrastructure and services.

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Chief Feehan was an advocate for advancing technology within the fire department. He lived his life for others. When Chris arrived, we already knew each other.

Thousands of people streaming out of the building. As fate would have it, Schwartz and many of the Tennessee Task Force 1, part of the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue team, were familiar with the conditions they would face.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Jim Schwartz was beginning his tour of operations at the time, Schwartz was about to be serving the last 40 years in some capacity. It felt just like the one before them. averaging 40°F, and the wind was howling. My father's career in the fire department is one thing. What he really gave to us as a family, as far as we know?

What inspired your father to pursue a career in public safety?

What would you describe the legacy he left behind?

How would you describe your father's approach to leadership?

"The life of Chief Feehan was unique in every way. He epitomized the selfless, courageous, and dedicated nature of a true hero."

If you could let the people who read this tribute know one thing about your dad, what would it be?

"He lived his life for others."