Buddy Dewar is the former Director of Florida’s State Fire Marshal’s Office and is an internationally known fire safety expert.  His fire service career includes US Army arson investigations, fire suppression chief, and former Superintendent of the Florida State Fire College.  Buddy received a BA degree in Economics and a MBA, and was inducted into Sigma Beta Delta, an international honor society in business, management, and administration in recognition of his academic achievements.

Buddy first entered the fire service as a Cadet in 1961 with the New River Fire Department in the Ft. Lauderdale area.  He entered the U.S. Army in 1966, and served as a company commander in Viet Nam where he was awarded the Bronze Star with “V” Device for Valor and First Oak Leaf Cluster for taking command of abandoned fire apparatus at a petroleum tank farm fire that was under rocket attack.  While stationed in Germany, Captain Dewar performed arson investigations throughout Europe.  After leaving the U.S. Army in 1972, he became a member of the Plantation Fire Department where he served as a Battalion Chief.  He began his tenure with the State Fire Marshal’s office as a Florida State Fire College Instructor in 1976, later becoming Superintendent of the Florida State Fire College in 1979, and Director of the State Fire Marshal’s Office in 1982 where he served until 1989.

Buddy Dewar is well known for his ability to quickly identify solutions to complex fire safety problems.  He has drafted and lobbied for most of Florida’s Fire Safety Laws and possesses an exceptional knowledge of fire codes.  He was asked to testify before a Congressional Committee investigating the tragic loss of life in the DuPont Plaza Hotel fire in San Juan and drafted the document that was used as a basis for both the Puerto Rican and the Congressional Fire Safety Acts.  Buddy has served on numerous commissions, committees and task forces and has received recognition in People Magazine.  He is the former Chair of the Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications Committee (NFPA 1001), the national committee that establishes firefighter performance standards, and currently serves on the Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) Health Care Occupancies Subcommittee.  Buddy is a past Chair of the Florida Fire Code Advisory Council.

Buddy has many landmark accomplishments and contributed immeasurably to the advancement of Florida’s fire service.  While serving as Chair of NFPA 1001, he fostered a nationwide level of training that led to many states establishing reciprocity with Florida for firefighter certification.  He Chaired the NFPA 1003 Committee, Firefighter Air Crash Rescue, and fostered the idea that led to floor level lighting in aircraft.  He aggressively lobbied for funding to build the current Florida State Fire College and negotiated property transfer from the Department of Corrections, a vast improvement from the former facility.  He drafted s.509.215 and 553.895 and successfully lobbied for public lodging fire sprinkler retrofit in response to the MGM Grand fire tragedy.  In response to a major apartment fire loss in the Florida Panhandle that was followed by major insurance cost upgrades and cancellations, Buddy drafted what became Chapter 87-287, LOF, which required NFPA 101 and NFPA 1 as the statewide base fire code and raised the standing of fire officials establishing a checks and balances in code enforcement. Buddy Chaired a Committee establishing fire sprinkler design standards for 4-story and below residential occupancies, Altamonte Springs being the Beta test community; the Committee work product was quickly adopted by NFPA and is now known as NFPA 13R.  In the early 1990s Buddy drafted and lobbied for a 3-story and above fire sprinkler requirement, a requirement that is now in today’s base codes.  Buddy continues to lobby in Tallahassee for improved fire safety.

Buddy served as President of the Florida State Firefighter’s Association which was incorporated in 1925.  And Buddy was awarded Life Membership in the National Fire Protection Association, a Fellow in the Florida Fire Marshal’s and Inspector’s Association, and Life Membership in the Florida State Firefighter’s Association in recognition of his dedication and service.  Buddy also was honored with the Olin Greene Fire Prevention Award by the National Association of State Fire Marshals, one of our nation’s highest fire service lifetime achievement awards.  Buddy also received the Fire Sprinkler Advocate of the Year award from the American Fire Sprinkler Association.  Buddy recently received lifetime achievement recognition from the Florida State Firefighter’s Association.  He is currently serving as Vice President of Regional Operations for the National Fire Sprinkler Association.

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