

James O. Page, J.D.



Born: August 7, 1936

Died: September 4, 2004

James O. Page joined his hometown fire department, the Monterey Park (Calif.) Fire Department, on his 21st birthday in 1957. Two years later, he joined the Los Angeles County Fire Department, advancing quickly to the rank of battalion chief. In 1971, the LACOFD tasked him with coordinating the department's implementation of paramedic rescue services. That same year, he also became an attorney.

In 1973, he helped make the word "paramedic" a household term through his work as a technical consultant and writer for the NBC TV series *Emergency!* His work with *Emergency!* also helped introduce this new, expanded role to the fire service.

In November 1973, Page resigned from the LACFD to become the first chief of EMS for the State of North Carolina and later, the executive director of Lakes Area EMS in Buffalo, N.Y., two posts that taught him much about volunteer and paid fire departments, as well as their successes and failures.

In 1976, Page was selected to serve as the first executive director of the non-profit ACT (Advanced Coronary Treatment) Foundation, where he championed the concepts of citizen CPR, advanced life support and regional EMS systems.

In September 1979, Page and Keith Griffiths acquired *Paramedics International Magazine* for \$1, changed the name to *JEMS* (the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*) and quickly turned it into an industry-leading journal. At the same time, Page served as manager of Technical Support Services for the U.S. Fire Administration.

In August 1984, while maintaining a leadership role with *JEMS*, Page accepted a battalion chief position with the Carlsbad (Calif.) Fire Department. Two years later, he accepted the fire chief position back in Monterey Park, where he had first started as a rookie firefighter more than 30 years before.

After his retirement from the fire service in 1989, Page took the positions of chairman and CEO of Jems Communications, and launched *FireRescue Magazine* and other products to address unmet needs in public safety.

During his career, Page wrote five books and more than 400 magazine articles and editorials, and gave 800 speeches throughout the world.

In 1995, Page was honored by the International Association of Fire Chiefs when they created the annual "James O. Page Award of Excellence." In 2000, *Fire Chief Magazine* featured him as one of the 20 most influential fire chiefs of the 20th century.

In December 2001, Page retired from Jems Communications and was named Publisher Emeritus. That same year, he formed the law firm Page, Wolfberg and

Wirth with attorneys Doug Wolfberg and Steve Wirth, and established offices in California and Pennsylvania.

Page was also a member of the County of Los Angeles Fire Museum Association and helped the museum organize its collection of famous apparatus, including Squad 51 from the *Emergency!* series.

Page was a father of four and a grandfather of six at the time of his death on Sept. 4, 2004. His long and distinguished career earned him the title "Father of Modern EMS" and made him a legend in America's fire service.