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Doug Pruitt and Ernie Pruitt present Miner with a plaque of appreciation on Saturday, Dec. 17



Fellow firefighters framed Miner's original turnout gear from the 1980s

"When you think about service, and who goes above and beyond, that's Jim Miner."

Miner joined the force in 1984 as one of the original charter members of Station 5, only a year after he moved to the area with his family from New York. Today, Miner is one of only two of the charter members still living, the other being Emergency 911 Dispatch Director Charles Worden.

At the time he began volunteering, Miner was also

working at the 3M Company, from which he retired in 1996 after 36 years of employment, devoting all of his time thereafter to the fire department and the Suches community.

During his time with the fire department, Miner accomplished many milestones for Station 5 and the UCFD, including CPR training for those who were interested, as well as laying the groundwork for the Union County First Responders.

"Early on, Jim took a CPR instructor class at 3M," said Ernie Pruitt, Station 5 firefighter. "He came up here and taught us all CPR. He taught us all our lifesaving techniques. Along with that, he started doing an annual CPR Saturday where he'd get people from all over the county, all over the region, to take these classes."

"Early in the '90s, he went and took part in a First Responders program. He came



More than 50 people crowded into the Suches Fire Department to pay their respects to Miner as he retires.

back and started talking about how we needed it over here, so we got First Responders because of it. That was the start of the Union County First Responders program as we know it today. Jim's efforts and his selflessness absolutely started this program."

Throughout the evening, many shared kind words and anecdotes from their time spent working with Miner, reminiscing on moments when his knowledge of the land and intuition proved to be an invaluable asset to the station and the community.

"He is one of the most selfless people I know," said Pruitt. "He has always put aside his needs to do what's best for his community. He's always given of himself to the point that I take my hat off to him."

"One thing I learned from Jim early on, we had a plane crash, and so we took off out to the site. When we got out there, I was gathering everyone up to start walking out to the crash when, after I finally listened to Jim, he told me that if we drove on up a little further we'd be right at the site of the crash and wouldn't have to walk so far."

"What that taught me, it's something that I try to live by and pass on, always listen to what other people are trying to tell you, because they might know something that you don't. I've taken that to heart."

Along with the thoughtful speeches, Miner was presented with his original turnout gear, framed, as well as



Jim Miner

a proclamation on his behalf, shared by Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, stating that Saturday, Dec. 17, would henceforth be known as "Jim Miner Day."

"It's unbelievable the amount of grit and fortitude you all have over here," said Commissioner Paris. "What a benefit the volunteer firefighters have been to this community, because we can't always get over here in time."

"These people have stepped up and came to service the community. Jim has really helped Union County and Suches, and we're very proud of that."

"This is just a proclamation, but it does come from the heart and soul of Union County, and we're very appreciative of your service."

Though humble in spirit, Miner leaves behind a legacy of abundant love and endless dedication for the place he has come to call home throughout the years.

"When I think back on the friends that I have made in this community and in this county, that list looks an awful lot like the roster of this department," said Miner. "I thank you all for your friendship and your affection. I love every one of you, very much."