



Fire Department

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John R. Leopold, County Executive

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PRESS RELEASE

****Retired Fire Department K-9 Succumbs to Illness****

For Immediate Release:

Jr.

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Millersville, Maryland...County Executive John R. Leopold and Fire Chief John Robert Ray regretfully announce that the County Fire Department's first Accelerant K-9, a Black Lab named Iris, has succumbed to cancer. In August 2010, K-9 Iris was diagnosed with cancer. A cancerous tumor was removed from her right leg. In November 2010, the tumor returned, ruptured, and was deemed in-operable. K-9 Iris was laid to rest on the afternoon of November 17, 2010.

"The loss of a pet, especially a pet who has not only been a companion, but a work partner can be very difficult. My heart goes out to Investigator Wilson and K-9 Iris' extended Fire Department Family. As a pet owner I know this sense of loss" said County Executive John R. Leopold.

K-9 Iris was born on February 7, 1999. She was raised in Edgewater, Maryland, surrogate puppy raisers for the Guiding Eyes for the Blind's Guide Dog Program. Iris went to the Seeing Eye K-9 training program in Massachusetts when she was 18 months old. Unfortunately, she did not successfully complete the program because she would rather chase squirrels than lead people. She was then referred to the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF).

K-9 Iris was sent to the ATF K-9 Training Academy in Front Royal, Virginia for the testing of accelerants and explosives. She completed an eight week imprinting process where she learned to recognize the ignitable liquids ranging from alcohol to gasoline. At the end of that period, she was joined with her new handler Investigator Doug Wilson of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department where they completed an additional five weeks of intense training. K-9 Iris and Investigator Doug Wilson graduated from the ATF K-9 Training Academy on March 21, 2001. Upon graduation K-9 Iris was made a full member of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department. Her badge number was 911. She wore her badge on her collar proudly. "K-9 Iris was a great asset to the Fire Department and an integral part of the investigatory team. Her work over the last decade has helped to protect and save lives in Anne Arundel County and surrounding Jurisdictions'."

On April 1, 2001, K-9 Iris and Investigator Wilson became the first Accelerant Detection K-9 team in the history of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department. Over the next seven years, Investigator Wilson and K-9 Iris assisted in fire investigations in numerous states along the Mid-Atlantic region. K-9 Iris participated in over 70 arrests; including, three where she identified the arsonists as they stood in the crowd at incident scenes.

K-9 Iris also participated in several highly publicized fire investigations. The first was the Dawson family fire in Baltimore City. In this case, K-9 Iris identified numerous articles of evidence which played a major role in the conviction of the drug dealer responsible for setting the fire. K-9 Iris also participated in the D.C. serial arsonist investigation, where she was involved in multiple property searches. The ATF obtained convictions in both of these cases, with the assistance of the Accelerant Detection K-9 teams who were involved.

K-9 Iris also showed off her talents at the Anne Arundel County Fire Department Fire Expo every year she was in service. During the Fire Expo, hundreds of her trading cards were given out to children. She also made appearances at many county schools and showed off her accelerant detection skills.

K-9 Iris retired from the Anne Arundel County Fire Department in February 2008 at a ceremony at the Arundel Center in Annapolis where County Executive John R. Leopold presented “Iris” with a great big bone in honor of her service to the County. K-9 Iris quickly became accustomed to retired life learning how to eat out of a bowl and getting treats she had never experienced while being on the job. K-9 Iris spent most of her time with her handler who also retired shortly after K-9 Iris. The two of them enjoyed retirement together as man and his best friend.

Shortly after K-9 Iris’s retirement, a second Accelerant K-9 was obtained by the County Fire Department in the spring of 2009. The current K-9 named Kinder, is a yellow Labrador Retriever who proudly serves the Department.

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