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## Boston promotes first woman to fire captain: 21-year veteran Irene Foley

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 4, 2012 01:39 PM

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In the front, from left to right: Boston Fire Commissioner Roderick Fraser, Lt. Edward Walsh, Capt. Irene Foley

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and District Chief Kevin Brooks. In the back, from left to right: Lt. Patrick Derick, Capt. Michael Carey, Deputy Chief Daniel McDevitt and Chief of Department Steve Abaira.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Boston Fire Department member Irene Foley this week became the first woman fire captain in the history of the nation's oldest fire department.

Five other Boston Fire Department members and Foley, who serves in the Fire Prevention Division, officially moved up in rank during a ceremony before family and friends at the department's headquarters Tuesday afternoon, officials said.

Foley was 16 years old when her father, 50-year-old Boston Firefighter Edwin "Dicer" Foley, died in the line of duty on [Dec. 30, 1970](#) while responding to a call from Engine 30. A plaque hangs at that station on Centre Street in West Roxbury in memory of Edwin Foley, a Hyde Park resident who served for more than 20 years in the department.

"She has followed in her father's footsteps," said Boston Fire spokesman Steve MacDonald. "She does a great job."

He said opportunities to advance within the department come through vacancies that open up mainly due to retirements. The promotion exams required to be considered to fill such spots are both challenging and "very competitive," according to MacDonald.

Foley joined Boston Fire 21 years ago when she was sworn in during Feb. 1991. She spent the first decade of her career as a firefighter at Engine 4 in the West End. She was later assigned to Engine 20 in Dorchester for two years.

MacDonald said that since she was promoted to Lieutenant and joined the Fire Prevention Division in 2003, Foley has worked as a liaison to the city's elderly population. She is regularly assigned to speak to seniors educating them on fire safety, including the importance of installing and regularly testing smoke and carbon dioxide detectors, he said.

Foley, who was promoted from the rank of lieutenant Tuesday, was not available to comment, the fire department spokesman said.

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Fire Commissioner Roderick Fraser also administered the oath of office to five other fire department members who were promoted: Daniel McDevitt, of District 6 which includes parts of Downtown and South Boston, who was promoted to deputy chief; Kevin Brooks, of Engine 39 in South Boston, who was promoted to district chief; Michael Carey, of Engine 37 in Roxbury, who was promoted to Captain; Patrick Derick, also of Engine 37, who was promoted to lieutenant; and Edward Walsh, of Ladder 15 in the Back Bay, who was also promoted to lieutenant.

Chief of Department Steve Abreira presented their certificates and badges.

At another ceremony Tuesday, two fire department members were honored for four decades of service in Boston.

Receiving 40-year certificates and pins were Lieutenant Tom McCann of Ladder 4 in Roxbury and Firefighter Nick DiMarino, currently serving as vice president of Firefighters Local 718.

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(City of Boston)

From left to right: Boston Fire Commissioner Roderick Fraser, Lt. Tom McCann, Firefighter Nick DiMarino and Chief of Department Steve Abreira.

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