

**Kenneth L. Erickson
Fire Chief (retired)
6 Timber Lane Gilford, NH 03249**

Board of Directors
100 Club of Maine
PO Box 365
York, Maine 03909

To the Honorable Board of Directors,

I was very pleased to hear that Maine is looking to form a 100 Club. I was slightly shocked to find that they did not have a Club. I thought every State in the country had a 100 Club.

The week of March 11, 2004 was an extremely difficult and emotional time for me and the family of Mark Miller. Mark had died during a training drill in Lake Winnepesaukee. Most of the week was a blur; getting ready for a funeral and continuing with the work of fire department. I was getting phone calls every day from many different people. By far, the most important call came from Nancy Keller of the 100 Club of New Hampshire. She quickly explained what she wanted to do and asked me to set up a meeting with Gayle, Mark's wife.

As a young boy my father had told me about the 100 Club. He was a Captain in the North Attleboro Fire Department. He would tell me that if anything bad happened to a policeman or fireman that the 100 Club would be there to help. I knew the 100 Club existed but had never used them. They were like a secret club. Then came Mark's death.

I remember going to Gayle's parents' home with Mike and Nancy. They presented Gayle with a check for \$10,000. She could use it for whatever she needed. They then told her about the benefits that she and her three daughters would receive. Gifts during holidays and college assistance were the two I remember. You could sense a feeling of relief from Gayle. She quickly realized that she was not going through this tragedy alone. There were wonderful people in this world who cared about her and her daughters and were truly saddened about her loss. I was amazed by the compassion presented by Mike and Nancy that day.

Over the years I would go to the annual membership drive. It was always a pleasure to see Mike and Nancy. They would ask how the Miller family was doing. I never realized how much support the 100 Club provided. I would see Gayle often and she would tell me about the three girls and how they would get gifts throughout the year. As the girls grew up, they would get money to help with schooling.

Last month we had a memorial service for the fifteenth anniversary of Mark's death. We will never forget Mark. He was a great husband, father and firefighter. I'll never forget what the 100 Club did for his family. A few years back I was finally able to join the 100 Club as an active firefighter. Now that I am retired, I will join as a full member. This organization is simply wonderful. They remain very discreet, almost myth-like; until you need them. It amazes me how often I see the emblem for the 100 Club on license plates or in a back window. There are dozens of people in the city of Laconia who are members. They never seek recognition.

I wish you great success in creating your Club. The emotional value and support to the first responders in the State of Maine is incalculable.

Sincerely, Kenneth L. Erickson, Fire Chief (retired) City of Laconia, NH