

Police Officer/Fire Chief Gordon Bruce Smith (1950-2026)

Gordon was born on June 24, 1950 in Kansas City, Missouri to Vernon Alfred and Cleo Rita (Naumann) Smith, Jr. He attended Colerain High School where he served as a hall monitor all four years and competed on the Chess Club. He graduated in 1968. He then attended Miami University majoring in aeronautics.

On March 18, 1969, Gordon joined the Dunlap Volunteer Fire Department as a Firefighter.

Gordon joined the United States Army National Guard on January 7, 1970 and after basic training attended Advanced Individual Training (Armor). After almost four years, he transferred to the Ohio National Guard and served in Troop A, 1st Squadron, of the 238th Cavalry Regiment. Sergeant Smith was honorably discharged in January 1976 with awards including Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.



Gordon joined the Cincinnati Police Department in its 58th Recruit Class on October 29, 1972. He finished 8th in his class of 72, was promoted to Patrolman on February 25, 1973, issued Badge 545, and assigned to District 4 (7017 Vine Street). On May 26, 1974, Patrolman Smith was rotated to District 1 (310 Lincoln Park Drive) upon which District 4 Commander, Captain Paul Twilling wrote that he had “progressed rapidly, has a great deal of potential, [and] should develop into an outstanding officer.” Less than a year later, District 1 Commander, Captain Howard Espelage, commended him for his professional manner of police work.

In September 1975, Officer Smith was appointed Assistant Fire Chief of the Colerain Township Fire Department. For four months, he concurrently served in the Fire Department, Police Division, and National Guard and for another ten months, two full-time positions in the Fire Department and Police Division.

With the layoff of 125 police officers looming in December 1976 due to City Hall fiscal mismanagement, Officer Smith resigned on October 21, 1976 with four years of law enforcement service and already three letters of appreciation and/or commendation.



From 1985 to 1987, Assistant Chief Smith attended the prestigious Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, becoming the first member of the Department to complete the rigorous three-year course. He was promoted to Fire Chief in 1987. During his tenure, Chief Smith was instrumental in implementing the Incident Command System within the Department which ultimately became standard throughout Hamilton County. He also helped implement firefighter accountability systems to better track personnel during emergency incidents. He served as President of the Hamilton County Fire Chiefs Association and was a member of the Board of Directors for the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association. He retired in 2015 with 46 years of service to his communities and country.

In October 2015, Colerain Township Station 109 was officially named in honor of Chief Smith.

In January 2016, Chief Smith and his wife, Deborah, were elected delegates to the Republican National Convention.

Chief Smith died on August 13, 2026 at the age of 76.

He was predeceased by his brother, Vernon Alfred Smith, III. Chief Smith is survived by his wife of 50 years, Deborah Loy (Dawson) Smith, and son, Steven Howard (Emily Giometti) Smith; and granddaughters, Raphaella Jane and Popi.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, September 19, 2026 at 10 a.m. at the White Oak Christian Church at 3675 Blue Rock Road.

Memorials may be made to [Hospice of Cincinnati](#) or [Bright Faces](#).