



*B*rent F. Burton is a 25 year

veteran of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. He currently serves as a Captain and is assigned in the city of Inglewood California. He has been a member of the Board of Directors for the African American Firefighter Museum since the Museum's inception in 1997.

Burton served as the Centennial Celebration Chairperson during the Museum's grand opening which occurred on December 13, 1997. The Celebration Committee honored the retired members of Stations 30 and 14 that served during the integration out of the Central Avenue stations from 1955 to 1956. These members were presented with African sashes and rode on antique apparatus down Central Avenue to the front of the Museum for a welcome reception.

President Burton's roots date back to 1936 when an older cousin, Lawrence "Lucky" Stewart came on the Los Angeles Fire Department and served his entire time on Central Avenue at both Stations 14 and 30. In 1981, Burton's first cousin Earl Boyd came on the Los Angeles Fire Department and ironically was assigned to Fire Station 14 as his first house.

As a youngster, Burton grew up as an admirer of Fire Station #30 when his mother would drive past the station after visiting relatives that lived on the "eastside" of Los Angeles. In 1985, prior to Burton being hired by the Los Angeles County Fire Department, he was present at the ceremony dedicating Station 30 as Historical/Cultural landmark # 289. Burton can recall the days in the early 1980s, when he and a fellow fire explorer from LAFD post 66 would drive to old 30's and manage to get into the station, just to walk around and visualize about how it was back in the 20's, 30's and 40's when the station was segregated.

Today as the President of the Museum, Burton is proud to be able to direct the efforts of this illustrious institution. Burton is also heir to the history of Los Angeles' pioneering Black Firefighters. He was educated first hand at the age of 16 by the griot himself, retired firefighter Arnett Hartsfield. "I can recite it, but he [*Hartsfield*] has lived it! "It is my hope that one day, one of our younger firefighters will step up and make a commitment to learning the history so it can carry on", says Burton.

Burton recalls something said to him when he was a rookie fire fighter by an older African American Firefighter. "Son, there are two kinds of fire fighters...firefighters and Black firefighters! When you learn the history of Black firefighters, then you will know what I mean!" After all of these years and after hearing many stories, Burton has found this to be true!

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