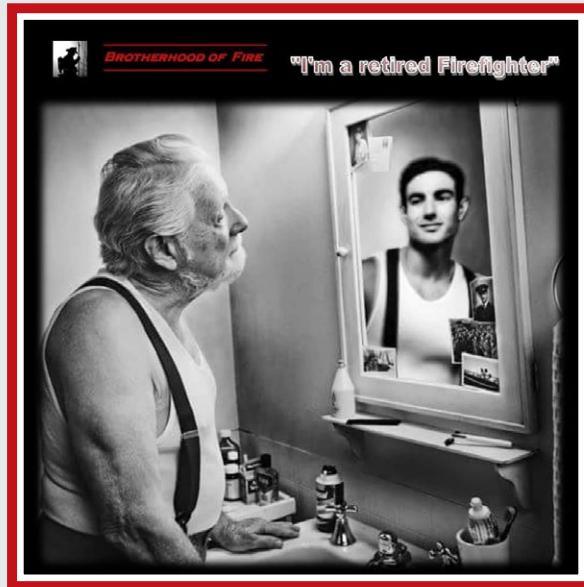


## *Thoughts of a retired fire fighter*



No, I haven't forgotten the excitement of riding on a fire rig.  
"Lights flashing, sirens wailing," nor the feeling of "a good save!"  
Whether it be human life or valued possessions of a fellow citizen.

I haven't forgotten the feeling of standing, ankle deep, in freezing water on a 5 below January night, gloves frozen to the nozzle, fighting a fire I know was caused by carelessness or worse.

I haven't forgotten the terror of being lost in a smoke filled building....feeling the taste of hot coffee and a cold meat loaf sandwich at four in the morning.

Now I walk into my old firehouse, only to find it filled with strangers.  
I may not walk as fast or stand as straight as you.  
My hair may be grey or thin.  
My jokes don't come as easy as they once did.

But I know in my heart I have paid the price and have earned the right to say proudly...  
"I'm a retired fire fighter".

Retired Battalion Chief Joe Carber (Now deceased)  
Fire Department City of New York (FDNY)