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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ONTARIO MOURNS THE SUDDEN PASSING OF RETIRED FIRE CHIEF ROBERT ELWELL**

ONTARIO, CA – The City of Ontario is mourning the loss of retired Fire Chief Robert Elwell, who passed away last Thursday evening.

Elwell, who served as Ontario’s Fire Chief from 2016 until his retirement last December, dedicated more than 30 years of service to the city. He began his career with Ontario as a Firefighter in 1985, working his way up the ranks to Fire Engineer, Fire Captain and Battalion Chief before being appointed to the top spot.

Elwell died suddenly last Thursday at his home in Rancho Cucamonga. He was 55 years old.

“I’m heartbroken at Rob’s passing, and my deepest condolences go out to his family,” said Mayor Paul Leon. “Rob dedicated his professional life to our city. He loved Ontario, and Ontario loved him.”

City Councilmember Jim Bowman, himself a retired Ontario Fire Chief, said Elwell left a positive impression on everyone he met.

“Rob was such a terrific leader and just a wonderful people person,” Bowman said. “He spent 30 years working his way up the system and learning what was needed to become Fire Chief. When he got the opportunity, he did a fantastic job. We’ll miss him.”

Elwell was succeeded as Fire Chief by Ray Gayk, himself a 21-year veteran of the department.

“It was an incredible honor to follow Rob in this role. He had a direct hand in so much of what makes ours a great fire department,” Gayk said. “Rob was, above all, a friend of mine. His passing has left us all in a state of shock.”

In memory of Chief Rob Elwell, there will be a Celebration of Life to be held on July 24th, 2019, 2 PM at the Ontario Convention Center at 2000 E Convention Center Way, Ontario, CA 91764.

For additional information, call (909) 395-2557.

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