



Todd Aldridge

OCFR Engineer

Academy Graduate

Early on the morning of February 24, 1989, Engine 36 was dispatched to a fire in a T-shirt store. Light smoke was showing from the attic area but the store itself was clear of smoke. Firefighters Mark Bengé and Richard Marcotte pulled a 1 3/4 inch hose to the front door and forced entry.

Engineer Todd Aldridge, who was Acting Lieutenant on this shift, ordered Bengé to pull ceiling tiles just inside the door to check fire conditions above them. The area was clear, so the crew began advancing deeper into the store. As they did so, Bengé kept pulling ceiling tiles but saw no sign of fire. Then all of a sudden, around ten minutes into the fire, the entire roof structure began collapsing into the first floor. Aldridge yelled to his the two firefighters to get out.

Bengé pushed Marcotte up next to a wall. Then, as he turned to help Aldridge, the collapsing roof fell upon the two men, trapping them. Marcotte was spared major injuries and was able to crawl to the glass door and break out with his SCBA bottle. Rescue attempts by other units had to be aborted because of the growing intensity of the fire. According to George Mullins, who was Battalion Chief at the time, Aldridge “would have made one hell of a good officer.” Aldridge was survived by his wife Patty.

