

[Click Here: The Firehouse Holiday SuperStore](#)

.com

in the **LINE OF DUTY**

.com

**SuperStore**

[news/features](#) | [interactive](#) | [live dispatch](#) | [training](#) | [events](#) | [infozone](#) | [images](#) |

Search

Select --

for

Go

[check e-mail](#) | [forums](#) | [chat](#) | [links](#) | [a](#)

► **news & reports**

[News Main](#)  
[Off-Site Headlines](#)  
[World of Fire Report](#)  
[Harry Carter](#)  
[In the Line of Duty](#)  
[Current News](#)  
[LODD Forum](#)  
[Resources](#)  
[Search USFA](#)  
[Search NFDC](#)  
[Wildfire Central](#)  
[Hometown Fire Wire](#)  
[Submit](#)  
[NewsTicker](#)

Updated: Sunday, December 24 - 12 AM  
 Home → [Line of Duty](#) → Story

E-Mail this story  to a friend/co-worker

## Chicago Fire Lieutenant Struck, Killed by Car at Accident Scene

Courtesy WMAQ-TV

CHICAGO - Lt. Scott Gillen was helping others at an accident early Saturday morning on the Bishop Ford Expressway and 115th street when an approaching car swerved out of control.

Lt. Gillen was 37 and was just promoted from engineer to lieutenant. He had been with the Chicago Fire Department for 14 years. He was assigned to truck company 27.

Early this morning while working on the two-car accident on the south bound lane of the Bishop Ford Expressway and 115th street, the lieutenant was hit by a speeding car. The left lane of the expressway was blocked by one of the disabled vehicles, the center lane by the fire truck. The only open lane was the right lane.

Officials say the lieutenant was walking behind the fire truck when a car came speeding down the center lane, ignoring the flashing emergency lights.

The impact sent the car toward the accident scene, pinning the lieutenant between the car and the fire truck. The lieutenant, who suffered serious injuries to his legs, was air-lifted to Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn where he later died.

### NOT JUST AN ACCIDENT

"I'm having a hard time calling this an accident," says Chicago Fire Commissioner James Joyce. "This was a crime, an absolute crime. These kinds of things go on all the time. Motorists do not respect the warning lights, the warning signs. The police on the streets are at risk investigating the accidents. Firemen working at accident scenes are at risk when we drive to fires. People do not respect the warning lights, there are drunk drivers out there. This is very hard for the department to handle."

He says the department followed proper procedure while working on the accident. Reckless homicide charges are pending tonight against the alleged drunk driver, a 26-year-old man from Hammond, Indiana. He walked away from the crash with minor injuries. Illinois State Police say alcohol and excessive speed were apparent factors in the crash, and have the driver in custody.

Lt. Gillen leaves behind a wife and four children. He comes from a family with a long history of service to the Chicago fire department. His father was a retired fire



► **forums**

► **live dispatch**

► **links**

► **events**

► **training zone**

► **images**

► **the magazine**

► **infozone**

► **e-commerce**

► **visitor tools**



**top**

Thiev  
Truck

Man  
Alive

Judg  
Philly

Hous  
Hosp

Cong  
\$100

Baby  
Surv

Wom  
L.A.

Chief  
Hous

Scho  
With

More

!

U of  
Inter  
Stud

Magi  
Fire

Sale:  
Mem

Save  
West

Feb !

Trair  
Dow

Desk  
Wally

fighter, and his all four of his brothers are fire fighters.

The people who were involved in the accident that Lt. Gillen attended to were not seriously injured.

**Related:**

<b>CODE 3</b> COLLECTIBLES® PRESERVE THE HONOR™	<b>LIMITED EDITION PRECISION DIECAST EMERGENCY VEHICLES</b> ONLINE ORDERING • COLLECTORS CLUB • BOARD & CHAT	
---	---	---

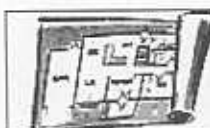
[Back to Top](#) | [Site Inquiries](#) | [Magazine Subscription Questions](#) | [User Agreement](#)

*Best Viewed Netscape/Explorer 4+ / 800x600 Screen Resolution*

All Content Copyright(c) 1997-2000 / Produced by [Cygnus Business Media](#), a Commerce Connect Media Company

**Chicago Tribune**  
chicagotribune.com

December 24, 2000



Get the inside story on  
brand new homes...



Full site index

Go

Full  
search

Search

Adve

## Latest News

Cook County  
'undervote' sets off  
alarm

Shades of war in  
season of peace

Tire testing overhaul  
is long overdue, critics  
say

Glad tidings for an  
instant family

Israelis, Palestinians  
fail to reach  
agreement

Victor Borge,  
musician and  
comedian, dies at 91

Milosevic foes claim  
landslide election  
victory

[More Latest News](#)

**SEIZE THE DAYWATCH**  
e-mail news briefs, fresh  
each weekday morning.

## Web specials



Special report:  
Gateway to Gridlock

The River Congo: A  
journey in three parts

Illinois school report  
card

Investigative report:  
Forbidden friendships  
between cops and  
criminals

Dangerous care:  
Nurses' hidden role in  
medical error

1999 Illinois State  
Police crime report

Jelly Roll blues

## FIREFIGHTER RESPONDING TO CRASH KILLED

By Julie Deardorff and Noah Isackson  
Tribune Staff Writers  
December 24, 2000

[CLICK HERE TO  
E-MAIL THIS STORY](#)

[CLICK HERE TO  
SEARCH ARCHIVES](#)

A recently promoted Chicago Fire Department lieutenant was fatally struck by a car Saturday as he prepared to leave the scene of a minor early-morning accident on the Bishop Ford Freeway.

Lt. Scott Gillen, 37, whose legs were crushed when he was pinned against a hook-and-ladder truck, died at Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn, but not before showing a rescue worker pictures of his wife, Terri, and five daughters.

Terri Gillen said Saturday that the rescue worker told her Gillen's last words were, "Please save my legs. I'm a fireman."

The motorist whose car slammed into Gillen allegedly had a blood-alcohol count "way over the legal limit" for driving and a revoked driver's license, said Fire Department Commissioner James Joyce, who was visibly shaken by the loss of the 14-year veteran.

"It's hard to call this an accident. It's a crime, an absolute crime," Joyce said at the hospital, where Gillen was airlifted at 4 a.m. and died at 12:50 p.m. "The motorist did not respect the warning signs and flares. As a longtime firefighter, I can't tell you how upset I am.

"We understand that we could be hurt at fires, by walls or roofs falling on us, or by smoke, but to have a firefighter die because a driver was trying to hurry by an accident scene is difficult to take."

Reckless homicide charges against a 26-year-old Hammond man were awaiting approval from the Cook County state's attorney's office, said Master Sgt. Martin McCarthy of the Illinois State Police. He would not say whether the man had been drinking or if

**Just  
Imagine  
Chicago**

Click here  
and the  
beginning  
begins

**Free  
Groceries  
for you  
Family  
Jewelry  
Preference  
No Ann**

Choose...

Go!

**CLICK HERE  
Chicago  
Holidays**

Advertising  
information

---

*More specials*

■ Gillen, a Beverly resident who was promoted from engineer to lieutenant two weeks ago, was stationed at Hook and Ladder Co. 27 in the Roseland neighborhood. He comes from a family of firefighters. Gillen's father, Donald, is a retired Chicago firefighter, and three of Gillen's brothers are Chicago firefighters.

Gillen's wife and five daughters--Kelly, 24; Kristen, 20; twins Megan and Moira, 19; and Brianne, 10--gathered at their home Saturday night and tried to digest the news. Two weeks ago, the daughters had inscribed their names on a medal to congratulate their father on his promotion, planning to give it to him for Christmas.

The Gillens had been married for 12 years. The four older daughters are from his wife's earlier marriage.

Described as possessing a wonderful sense of humor, Gillen loved playing sports and helping neighbors, whether by shoveling snow or fixing a broken window.

"He was a good fireman and a great father. He did everything for these kids, no questions asked," Terri Gillen said. "And he and Brianne were inseparable. I explained [to Brianne] that he didn't go anywhere, he's right here, he'll always be here and that she and I will have to help each other out.

"She told me that wasn't good enough, that I wasn't enough fun and wouldn't drive fast on a snowmobile.

"It's just not fair," she said of the way her husband died. "I don't know who this guy is who was in such a hurry, and, of course, I'm angry, but I won't go there. I just hope he gets the worst [punishment] he can possibly get."

McCarthy said firefighters, paramedics and Illinois State Police were tending to a two-car crash in the southbound lanes of the Bishop Ford when a speeding red Oldsmobile tried to slip by traffic and struck Gillen at 2:50 a.m. near 115th Street.

Gillen was standing behind a firetruck, two Illinois State Police cars and a line of flares when he was pinned between the Oldsmobile and the firetruck, McCarthy said.

Traffic was being diverted into the right lane at the time of the incident, with the left lane blocked by one of the disabled vehicles and the firetruck blocking the center lane. Joyce said the truck was following procedure and was parked in a manner to protect victims of the accident.

Police said Gillen was inspecting the firetruck to make sure all

clipped the back of another truck in the right lane and spun into the firetruck, striking Gillen. There were no injuries in the first accident, McCarthy said.

One of Gillen's firefighter brothers, responding to another call, heard Gillen on the radio minutes before he was struck, then realized something was wrong when he heard frantic radio calls from the crew of Hook and Ladder 27, Joyce said.

It was the second time this year that a Chicago firefighter was killed by a vehicle while in the line of duty. On April 29, Lt. L.C. Merrell was thrown from a firetruck after a collision between it and a pickup truck that ran a stop sign at 107th and Throop Streets, authorities said. After that incident, the city moved to raise the fine for motorists who fail to yield to sirens and warning lights, to \$500 from \$250.

Visitation for Gillen will be from 2 to 9 p.m. Tuesday in Robert J. Sheehy & Sons Funeral Home, 9000 W. 151st St., Orland Park. Mass will be said at 10 a.m. Wednesday in St. John Fisher

[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Tech](#) | [Leisure](#) | [Travel](#) | [Classified: Jobs](#) · [Cars](#) · [Homes](#)

[Top of page](#) | [Home](#) | [Copyright and terms of service](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Customer service](#) | [Advertise](#)





One click  
holiday shopping  
**amazon.com.**

**TRAVEL** Latest news & online bookings [www.searchchicago.com/travel](http://www.searchchicago.com/travel) click here

# News

Architecture

**Chicago  
Sun-Times**

Home

## Sections

News  
Sports  
Business  
Showcase  
Columnists  
Classifieds  
Search  
Yellow Pages

## Inside News

► [Architecture](#)  
► [Autos](#)  
► [Commentary](#)  
► [Elections](#)  
► [Health](#)  
► [Lottery](#)  
  [Numbers](#)  
► [Obituaries](#)  
► [World News](#)  
  [Wire](#)

## Columnists

► [Kupcinet](#)  
► [Mitchell](#)  
► [Neal](#)  
► [Novak](#)  
► [Quick Takes](#)  
► [Roeper](#)  
► [Sneed](#)  
► [Steinberg](#)  
► [E-mail the News Staff](#)

**Today's News**

► [7-day Archive](#) ► [Commentary](#) ► [Lottery](#) ► [Obituaries](#) ► [Printable Version](#)

## Driver strikes, kills firefighter at crash site

December 24, 2000

BY KATE N. GROSSMAN STAFF REPORTER

The older brother was the first to know something had gone wrong.

The Gillen brothers, both firefighters, were on separate runs Saturday morning. Matt knew his brother Scott had arrived at an accident scene on the Bishop Ford Freeway on the Far South Side around 2:30 a.m.

Then, commotion filled the Fire Department airwaves. Matt tried to reach Scott. There was no response.

Scott, one of four firefighting brothers, was down, struck by a motorist. Less than 12 hours later, the father of five was dead.

Police officials said the driver, Carlando J. Hurt, 26, of Hammond, Ind., ignored flares and warning lights and struck Gillen as he stood near his truck at 115th Street.

Fire officials said the driver had a blood alcohol level above the legal limit and was driving on a revoked license.

"I have a hard time calling this an accident," said Fire Commissioner James Joyce as he stood outside Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn, where Gillen died Saturday afternoon. "This was a crime. Unfortunately, we have too many people out there who don't give a damn about us."

Initially, police sought to charge Hurt with drunken driving but decided to seek a charge of reckless homicide after Gillen died around 1 p.m. State's attorney spokeswoman Marci O'Boyle said prosecutors would await results of an autopsy scheduled for today before deciding on charges.

Two weeks ago, Gillen, 37, had been promoted to lieutenant after 14 years

with the department. Firefighting runs in the family. His three brothers are firemen, and his father is a retired Chicago firefighter.

Gillen lived with his wife, Terri, and their children in West Beverly. The couple had five daughters, ranging in age from 10 to 24. His wife and friends described Gillen as a devoted family man with a passion for sports.

"He always had time for kids--any kids," Terri Gillen said. "That was where his joy was."

"You can't say enough nice things about him," said Mary Pat Rohan, Gillen's neighbor for the last 15 years. "All of his free time was spent watching his kids play sports or doing sports himself."

"He was just a great guy," Rohan said, choking back tears.

Police said Gillen's run Saturday began like any other, when his fire truck and State Police responded to an accident on the freeway. When an ambulance is not available, firefighters respond to assist with medical equipment. It turned out no one was hurt.

Gillen's truck was parked in the right and center lanes with its lights flashing. Behind it were two marked State Police cars, also with their lights flashing, said State Police Master Sgt. Martin McCarthy. Troopers had set out flares to direct traffic into the far left lane. Joyce said the firefighters and the State Police followed procedures.

McCarthy said a red Oldsmobile approached and apparently tried to beat a tractor-trailer into the open left lane. It didn't come close to making it. The Oldsmobile accelerated, drove over the flares and struck Gillen as he stood at the rear left corner of the fire truck, pinning him and crushing his legs.

Gillen was airlifted to Christ Hospital. He was pronounced dead at 12:50 p.m.

This is the second loss of this kind for the Fire Department this year. In April, Lt. L.C. Merrell, a father of four, was killed when his fire truck collided with a landscaping truck after its driver allegedly sped through a stop sign.

Joyce, who struggled to hold back tears, said this just didn't add up.

"I understand that we are going to be injured in fires, that we are going to be hit with falling walls, falling roofs. That's part of the job," Joyce said. "But I have a hard time handling this."

[Back to top](#) ■ [Back to News](#)

**Chicago Tribune**  
chicagotribune.com

December 25, 2000

Can you picture your new home?



#### Latest News

Pope delivers hopeful Christmas message

Sky watchers await Christmas solar eclipse

It's white Christmas for some, bitter cold for many

Military station tracks Santa's journey

Heating costs rise sharply nationwide

Clinton's last White House Christmas is traditional

Christmas grim and subdued in Bethlehem

Polls: Israelis split on Clinton's proposals

[More Latest News](#)

**SEIZE THE DAYWATCH**  
e-mail news briefs, fresh each weekday morning.

#### Web specials



Special report:  
[Gateway to Gridlock](#)

[The River Congo: A journey in three parts](#)

[Illinois school report card](#)

Investigative report:  
[Forbidden friendships between cops and criminals](#)

[Dangerous care: Nurses' hidden role in medical error](#)

[1999 Illinois State Police crime report](#)

Full site index

Go

Search

Full search

Adve

## DRIVER CHARGED IN CHICAGO FIREFIGHTER'S DEATH

By Mickey Ciokajlo and Courtney Challos

Tribune Staff Writers  
December 25, 2000

[CLICK HERE TO E-MAIL THIS STORY](#)

[CLICK HERE TO SEARCH ARCHIVES](#)

An Indiana man with a long history of driving infractions in Illinois was charged Sunday with reckless homicide in the crash that killed a firefighter working an accident scene on the Bishop Ford Freeway, officials said.

Carlando J. Hurt, 26, of Hammond originally was taken into custody early Saturday for suspected drunken driving after his car struck Lt. Scott Gillen, 37, pinning him to a firetruck, state police said. However, the state's attorney's office is withholding details about the charge until a bond hearing Monday, said spokeswoman Marcy O'Boyle.

"This is not an accident," Chicago Fire Commissioner James Joyce told reporters Sunday outside Gillen's home. "This driver has a habit and a history of doing what he wants to do."

Hurt was issued a driving permit in Illinois in November 1989 but it expired a year later, said David Druker, spokesman for the secretary of state.

Despite not having a driver's license, Hurt received at least 12 tickets since 1994. The state revoked his driving privileges in May 1999 for Hurt's habitual violation of traffic laws, Druker said.

"He should not have been driving," said Druker, who Sunday could not specify why Hurt was ticketed. "This man went a decade without a license in Illinois."

While prosecutors prepared their case against Hurt, family members and colleagues remembered Gillen, a 14-year veteran, who leaves behind a wife and five daughters. He was a motivated professional, they said, who worked hard and was promoted to

**Just Imag**  
**Chica**  
Click  
and the  
Begins w

**Free**  
**Groce**  
**for y**  
**Fam**  
**Jewel**  
**Preferre**  
**No Ann**

Choose...  
Go!

**20**  
**Los Angeles**  
**January**  
**show**  
**Advertising**  
**information**



Jelly Roll blues

*More specials*

Three of Gillen's older brothers are Chicago firefighters and their father retired from the department, but Gillen was the first to reach lieutenant.

"We're all take-control guys," said Mark Gillen, 45, a 20-year veteran. "He was just a little bit more. ... He had a lot of leadership qualities."

Gillen spent many years working at Engine 126 in the South Shore neighborhood, where he earned a reputation as an aggressive worker who enjoyed helping newer firefighters, said colleague Brian Campbell.

Gillen worked hard to get promoted to engineer several months ago and then, recently, to lieutenant.

"He studied hard," Campbell said. "He was a goal-oriented guy."

Since he was promoted to engineer, Gillen had been rotating among different fire houses within District 6 on the South Side. On Saturday morning, he was assigned to Hook and Ladder 27, the truck his brother Mark worked on for two decades until he was transferred six months ago.

Black and purple bunting hung Sunday from the front of the two-story, redbrick station house at 34 E. 114th St. It was a solemn tribute to a firefighter who, less than 36 hours earlier, became the second firefighter in eight months to be killed in a traffic accident.

Police said vehicles had been diverted into the right lane of the southbound Bishop Ford near 115th Street at 2:50 a.m. Saturday for a two-car accident in which no one was injured.

Gillen was inspecting the firetruck, ready to head back to the station, when Hurt's Oldsmobile clipped another truck and spun into Gillen, pinning him between the car and the firetruck.

Gillen was airlifted to Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn, where he died before 1 p.m.

Mark Gillen said a nurse told the family that Scott Gillen asked hospital personnel to remove his wallet and show him the pictures of his wife and daughters.

Gillen had been married for 12 years to Terri Gillen, whose father, Bob Gorman, is a retired fire captain.

Compounding the tragedy, this weekend was the 20th anniversary of the death of Terri Gillen's sister, Judith Gorman, who was 14

Highway, Joyce said.

Joyce, who served on Truck 8 with Gillen's father, Donald, visited the family Sunday with the president of the One Hundred Club of Cook County, a civilian group that supports the families of fallen firefighters and police officers.

"We want the family to know that the public shares their grief," said the Club's Ralph Scheu, who presented the family a \$5,000 check and said more financial assistance is available to the Gillens. "It's a death that hurts all of us, especially on Christmas Eve."

Another brother of the fallen firefighter, Matt Gillen, 47, said in an interview Sunday that he fell through the first floor into a basement of a burning house just a few weeks ago. He was shaken up but went right back to work.

"Every once in awhile, someone is there a second too early or a second too late," he said of the dangers of the job.

Firefighters said Sunday they recognize danger is a daily part of their job, but they hoped drivers would learn a lesson from Scott Gillen's death and proceed with caution when approaching emergency crews on a scene.

"All it is is respect," Campbell said. "If the public is not going to

[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Tech](#) | [Leisure](#) | [Travel](#) | [Classified: Jobs](#) · [Cars](#) · [Homes](#)

[Top of page](#) | [Home](#) | [Copyright and terms of service](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Customer service](#) | [Advertise](#)


☒ **Pets allowed**   ☐ **Parking**  
☐ **\$600 a month**   ☐ **Furnished**




**apartments.com**  
*Click!*

Calculate  
now for  
retirement



 [voyager.net](http://voyager.net)

# News

Architecture  **GO**

**Chicago  
Sun-Times**

**Today's News**

[7-day Archive](#) [Commentary](#) [Lottery](#) [Obituaries](#) [Printable Version](#)

[Home](#)

## Sections

[News](#)  
[Sports](#)  
[Business](#)  
[Showcase](#)  
[Columnists](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Search](#)  
[Yellow Pages](#)

## Inside News

[Architecture](#)  
[Autos](#)  
[Commentary](#)  
[Elections](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Lottery](#)  
[Numbers](#)  
[Obituaries](#)  
[World News](#)  
[Wire](#)

## Columnists

[Kupciner](#)  
[Mitchell](#)  
[Neal](#)  
[Novak](#)  
[Quick Takes](#)  
[Roeper](#)  
[Sneed](#)  
[Steinberg](#)  
[E-mail the  
News Staff](#)

## Driver has long history of tickets

*December 25, 2000*

**BY MAUREEN O'DONNELL STAFF REPORTER**

The motorist who allegedly struck and killed a city fire lieutenant and father of five had his driving privileges revoked after an 11-year record of rule-breaking, including speeding, transporting open alcohol and defying requirements for a valid driver's license or permit, officials said.

Carlando J. Hurt, 26, of the 7200 block of Jefferson in Hammond, Ind., was charged with reckless homicide Sunday in the death of Lt. Scott Gillen on Saturday.

Since 1994, Hurt has been hit with eight tickets for driving with a suspended license or permit and three tickets for driving without a valid license or permit, according to David Druker, a spokesman for Secretary of State Jesse White. Hurt also received a ticket for transporting an open container of alcohol in his vehicle, Druker said.

"The guy should not have been on the road," Druker said.

Fire officials said Hurt was driving drunk when he hit Gillen, 37, as he responded to an accident call on the Bishop Ford Freeway. "Until he appears in Bond Court [today], we have nothing to say" about Hurt's blood-alcohol level, said a spokeswoman for the Cook County state's attorney's office.

Hurt obtained an Illinois driving permit in 1989 when he was 15 and living on Chicago's South Side. The permit expired in 1990. "As best we can tell, he never had an Illinois driver's license," Druker said.

Hurt's driving privileges were suspended in 1998 for driving on a revoked or suspended permit, Druker said. The following year, the state revoked his driving privileges for being in habitual violation of vehicle laws, he said.

Hurt had an Indiana driver's license in 1990 but apparently did not renew it, which should be done every four years, police sources said.

Visitation for Gillen is from 2 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Robert J. Sheehy & Sons Funeral Home, 9000 W. 151st St., Orland Park. Mass will be offered at 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. John Fisher Church, 10234 S. Washtenaw. Burial will be in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Worth.

[Back to top](#) ■ [Back to News](#)

**Visit Our Partners**  **GO**



We've bought time.

[\[News\]](#) [\[Sports\]](#) [\[Business\]](#) [\[Showcase\]](#) [\[Classifieds\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#) [\[Feedback\]](#) [\[Home\]](#)

Copyright 2000, Digital Chicago Inc.

**Chicago Tribune**  
chicagotribune.com

December 26, 2000

Find

Full site index

Go

Full  
search

Search

Ad

Find  
who  
r  
U!  
Advertis  
informa

#### Latest News

Seven dead in office  
shooting near Boston  
Contact with Mir  
space station restored

IDOT delays snow  
removal efforts

Bush goes to Florida  
for fishing vacation

Christmas fire kills at  
least 309 in China

\$400,000 bond set in  
crash that killed  
firefighter

'I have to be strong,'  
says mom who lost 3  
to gunfire

[More Latest News](#)

**SEIZE THE  
DAYWATCH**  
e-mail news briefs, fresh  
each weekday morning.

#### Markets

DOW:

+56.84 10692.4

NASDAQ:

-23.5 2493.52

S&P 500:

+9.24 1315.19

Find a quote:

Search

[Full market report](#)

#### Web specials



Special report:  
Gateway to Gridlock  
Investigative report:

## \$400,000 bond set in crash that killed firefighter

Motorist was drunk, judge told

By Elizabeth Neff

Tribune Staff Writer  
December 26, 2000

A Cook County judge set bond at \$400,000 Monday for a 26-year old Indiana man whom prosecutors say was driving drunk when his car slammed into a Chicago firetruck, killing a lieutenant working an expressway accident.

Carlando J. Hurt of Hammond, who is charged with reckless homicide, was deeply shaken and remorseful when he learned Sunday that Chicago Fire Lt. Scott Gillen, 37, had died in the crash early Saturday, said his attorney, Julianna Greenspan.

Prosecutors told Associate Judge Neil J. Linehan that tests showed Hurt's blood alcohol level was 0.132 percent at the time of the crash. The Illinois limit is 0.08 percent.

Greenspan said Hurt is married with two young children and works for his father's pest-control business. Both his father and grandfather are ministers, she said after the court hearing.

"He said he felt sick about it and just terrible about it," Greenspan said. "He was very shaken up. This is a tragic loss. Mr. Hurt's family feels horrible for their loss."

Hurt was not at the hearing, but appeared via a video hookup from a holding cell. He stood with his head bowed during the brief hearing. Linehan said a \$20,000 bond set for Hurt in a warrant issued for driving on a suspended license will stand.

In addition to reckless homicide, Hurt was also charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, failing to yield to emergency vehicles, driving too fast for conditions and driving on a revoked license.

Two people who said they were relatives of Hurt, but who would



[The River Congo: A journey in three parts](#)

[Illinois school report card](#)

[Dangerous care: Nurses' hidden role in medical error](#)

[1999 Illinois State Police crime report](#)

[Jelly Roll blues](#)

[More specials](#)

sympathies to their family," a male relative said. "Other than that we have no comment."

Hurt's father and several other family members, as well as Greenspan, arrived in court too late for the 12:30 p.m. hearing. They were told the hearing was to begin at 1 p.m., she said.

Hurt's father also declined comment Monday.

Hurt moved with his wife and two children, ages 6 and 7, to Hammond two years ago after spending his entire life in Cook County, said Lisa Berman, assistant public defender, who represented Hurt during the bond hearing. He has been working at a pest-control company for the last three years, she said.

Hurt was issued a driving permit in Illinois in November 1989, but it expired a year later, said David Druker, spokesman for the secretary of state. Hurt received at least 12 tickets since 1994, and the state revoked his driving privileges in May 1999 for habitual violation of traffic laws, he said.

Hurt has been cited five times for driving on a revoked license and once for having an open container of alcohol in his vehicle, Assistant State's Atty. Jeffrey Levine said at the hearing.

Firefighters, paramedics and Illinois State Police were tending to a two-car crash in the southbound lanes of the Bishop Ford Freeway near 115th Street at 2:50 a.m. Saturday when Hurt's red Oldsmobile tried to slip by traffic and struck Gillen, said State Police Master Sgt. Martin McCarthy. Gillen was standing behind a firetruck, two police cars, and a line of flares when he was pinned between the Oldsmobile and firetruck, he said.

Gillen, who is survived by a wife and five daughters, was a 14-year veteran of the department. Older brothers are Chicago firefighters, and their father is a retired firefighter. Gillen of Beverly was the first to reach the rank of lieutenant.

Visitation will be held from 2 to 9 p.m. Tuesday in Robert J. Sheehy & Sons Funeral Home, 9000 W. 151st St., Orland Park. Mass will be said at 10 a.m. Wednesday in St. John Fisher Catholic Church, 10234 S. Washtenaw Ave., Chicago.

A preliminary hearing for Hurt was set for noon Tuesday. Hurt is also scheduled to appear at 10 a.m. Wednesday in Traffic Court.

- [E-mail this story to a friend](#)
- [More articles on the Metro Chicago home page](#)

Subj: Fwd: \$400,000 BOND SET IN FIREFIGHTER DEATH JUDGE TOLD DRIVER WAS WELL OVER D...  
Date: 12/26/00 1:53:11 PM US Mountain Standard Time  
From: SachsGM  
To: Kroche1234, LHSachs

---

Forwarded Message:

Subj: \$400,000 BOND SET IN FIREFIGHTER DEATH JUDGE TOLD DRIVER WAS WELL OVER DUI LIMIT  
Date: 12/26/00 8:28:08 AM US Mountain Standard Time  
From: GermanFD

## **\$400,000 BOND SET IN FIREFIGHTER DEATH JUDGE TOLD DRIVER WAS WELL OVER DUI LIMIT**

By Elizabeth Neff  
Tribune Staff Writer  
December 26, 2000

A Cook County judge set bond at \$400,000 Monday for a 26-year old Indiana man whom prosecutors say was driving drunk when his car slammed into a Chicago firetruck, killing a lieutenant working an expressway accident.

Carlando J. Hurt of Hammond, who is charged with reckless homicide, was deeply shaken and remorseful when he learned Sunday that Chicago Fire Lt. Scott Gillen, 37, had died in the crash early Saturday, said his attorney, Julianna Greenspan.

Prosecutors told Associate Judge Neil J. Linehan that tests showed Hurt's blood alcohol level was 0.132 percent at the time of the crash. The Illinois limit is 0.08 percent.

Greenspan said Hurt is married with two young children and works for his father's pest-control business. Both his father and grandfather are ministers, she said after the court hearing.

"He said he felt sick about it and just terrible about it," Greenspan said.

"He was very shaken up. This is a tragic loss. Mr. Hurt's family feels horrible for their loss."

Hurt was not at the hearing, but appeared via a video hookup from a holding cell. He stood with his head bowed during the brief hearing.

Linehan said a \$20,000 bond set for Hurt in a warrant issued for driving on a suspended license will stand.

In addition to reckless homicide, Hurt was also charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, failing to yield to emergency vehicles, driving too fast for conditions and driving on a revoked license.

Two people who said they were relatives of Hurt, but who would not identify themselves, were at the bond hearing.

"We give our sympathies to their family," a male relative said. "Other than that we have no comment."

Hurt's father and several other family members, as well as Greenspan, arrived in court too late for the 12:30 p.m. hearing. They were told the hearing was to begin at 1 p.m., she said.

Hurt's father also declined comment Monday.

Hurt moved with his wife and two children, ages 6 and 7, to Hammond two years ago after spending his entire life in Cook County, said Lisa Berman, assistant public defender, who represented Hurt during the bond hearing. He has been working at a pest-control company for the last three years, she said.

Hurt was issued a driving permit in Illinois in November 1989, but it expired a year later, said David Druker, spokesman for the secretary of state.

Hurt received at least 12 tickets since 1994, and the state revoked his driving privileges in May 1999 for habitual violation of traffic laws, he said.

Hurt has been cited five times for driving on a revoked license and once for having an open container of alcohol in his vehicle, Assistant State's Atty. Jeffrey Levine said at the hearing.

Firefighters, paramedics and Illinois State Police were tending to a two-car crash in the southbound lanes of the Bishop Ford Freeway near 115th Street at 2:50 a.m. Saturday when Hurt's red Oldsmobile tried to slip by traffic and struck Gillen, said State Police Master Sgt. Martin McCarthy.

Gillen was standing behind a firetruck, two police cars, and a line of flares when he was pinned between the Oldsmobile and firetruck, he said.

Gillen, who is survived by a wife and five daughters, was a 14-year veteran of the department.

Three older brothers are Chicago firefighters, and their father is a retired firefighter. Gillen of Beverly was the first to reach the rank of lieutenant.

Visitation will be held from 2 to 9 p.m. Tuesday in Robert J. Sheehy & Sons Funeral Home, 9000 W. 151st St., Orland Park. Mass will be said at 10 a.m. Wednesday in St. John Fisher Catholic Church, 10234 S. Washtenaw Ave., Chicago.

A preliminary hearing for Hurt was set for noon Tuesday. Hurt is also scheduled to appear at 10 a.m. Wednesday in Traffic Court.

Chief John M. Buckman  
German Township Volunteer Fire Department  
<http://www.germanfiredept.org>  
Vice-President  
International Association of Fire Chiefs  
<http://www.iafc.org>

"If you pump long enough, hard enough, and enthusiastically enough, sooner or later the effort will bring forth the reward." Zig Ziglar

**Chicago Tribune** NEWS METRO DAYWATCH**HOME****Thursday,  
December 28,  
2000**[PAGE ONE](#) | [NEWS](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [LEISURE](#)**CHICAGO**[COMMUNITIES](#) | [MARKETPLACES](#) | [INTERACT](#) | [CUSTOMIZE](#)

You are using a customized version of the Internet Tribune. To restore the full-featured version, click [here](#).

**NEWS INDEX:**

[Metro Daywatch](#)  
[Metro](#)  
[Metro - Chicago](#)  
[Metro - Du Page](#)  
[Metro - Lake](#)  
[Metro - McHenry](#)  
[Metro - Northwest](#)  
[Metro - Southwest](#)  
[Nation/World](#)  
[Obituaries](#)  
[Opinion](#)  
[Weather](#)  
[Columnists](#)  
[Print Edition](#)

## 'MY FRIEND, CONFIDANT AND HERO'

**By Elizabeth Neff**

Tribune Staff Writer

December 28, 2000

Emergency-room paramedic Nancy Nunez met Chicago Fire Lt. Scott Gillen just after 3 a.m. Saturday on a cold helicopter pad at Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn.

Although she thought she was ready for what was about to happen, Nunez said she will carry the experience with her for the rest of her life.

"No matter how many hours you put in in a day or week, or how much training you receive, no one can ever prepare you for a dying man's last words," Nunez said Wednesday in a tearful speech directed at Gillen's family during his funeral mass. "I wondered why God put me on that helipad that night, but I believe I was supposed to be Scott's voice, to let you know how he asked for you and how much he loved you."

Gillen, 37, died before 1 p.m. Saturday after suffering massive blood loss and kidney and heart failure. Prosecutors say Carlando J. Hurt of Hammond, Ind., was drunk when he drove his car over flares and crashed into Gillen at 2:50 a.m., pinning him against a firetruck he was manning at an accident on the Bishop Ford Freeway near 115th Street.

Wednesday, hundreds of people packed St. John Fisher Church on the Southwest Side after watching pallbearers remove Gillen's casket from high atop a firetruck while bagpipes played.

Amid the solemn pageantry of the firefighter's funeral, which included remarks by the city's highest officials, Nunez's words drew the strongest response.

She said that when she greeted Gillen on the hospital rooftop and asked him how he was doing, he let her know he was a firefighter and asked her to please save his legs, she said. When she reassured him he



would always be a firefighter no matter what happened to his legs, he asked her a second time.

Just after Gillen was brought inside, Nunez said he asked her to go into his left pocket to retrieve and show him a picture of his daughter. Looking at the picture, Gillen next gave Nunez phone numbers, asking her to please call his wife, Terri, and his parents.

Nunez said she told him she would and asked him to relax because he would soon need to be intubated to assist with his breathing. In the hours to come, she held his hand, covered him in warm blankets and promised not to leave his side, assuring him that his family and friends were probably already at the hospital and that they loved him.

When Nunez realized she could not accompany Gillen into surgery, she left him by drawing the sign of a cross over his head and heart. Gillen fought diligently for his life and was determined to stay alive for his family, Nunez said.

"I can't imagine your darkness or pain, because mine is crippling," Nunez told hundreds of firefighters and mourners.

"If only for four hours, he was my friend, confidant and hero. I will strive to live my life according to Scott's ethics."

Just two weeks earlier, the 14-year veteran had become the first in a family of firefighters to be promoted to lieutenant. Gillen, the youngest of six brothers, has three brothers who are firefighters. His father is retired from the department.

Kilted bagpipers from the Chicago Fire Department Emerald Society played in Wednesday's snowy weather, and a long line of firefighters standing six-people deep filled the street outside the church.

Terri Gillen looked on, surrounded by her five daughters. One of Gillen's stepdaughters, Megan Conlon, clutched his battered black helmet, fighting back tears as Gillen's casket was lowered off a firetruck for the mass. Megan and Moira Conlon led mourners in a prayer during the mass.

"Scott was proud to be a Chicago firefighter and died while responding to those who needed his help," Megan Conlon said Wednesday. "We pray today for all firefighters, paramedics and police officers whose lives are lived in service to others."

Chicago Fire Commissioner James Joyce said that Gillen was doing exactly what he should have before he was hit, helping block off traffic to protect those at the accident scene.

"I'll never forget the faces and gestures of family and friends all trying to understand what was happening to them," Joyce said, describing the scene at the hospital Saturday.

"The frustration was overwhelming. We all wanted someone there to



make it all better, but our roles changed as the rescuers became the victims, a role we are not prepared for."

Speaking at Wednesday's funeral, Mayor Richard Daley described Gillen as a hero.

"There are few higher callings in the community than saving lives and protecting people," Daley said. "In 1986, Scott Gillen answered his call. He was taken from us while fulfilling his obligation, and that humbles us."

As Gillen's family and friends mourned Wednesday, Hurt appeared in Traffic Court briefly on previous charges of driving with a suspended license. Hurt, who is charged with reckless homicide, has a long history of traffic violations and license suspensions in Illinois, including speeding, illegally transporting open alcohol and several instances of driving on a suspended license.

In 1999, a \$20,000 bond was issued in an arrest warrant after Hurt failed to appear in court on traffic tickets he received in 1998 for allegedly speeding, not wearing a seat belt, carrying open alcohol and driving with a suspended license. The warrant was in effect at the time of the crash.

Hurt's blood-alcohol level was .132 percent at the time of the crash, prosecutors said. The Illinois limit is .08.

Hurt, who is being held on \$400,000 bond, moved to Indiana two years ago with his wife and two young children, said his attorney, Julianna Greenspan.

His father is a minister, and he works for his father's pest control business, she said.

Gillen's family members took turns placing red roses and other flowers on Gillen's grave after a brief indoor ceremony.

Some 15 firefighters with snow shovels showed up at the Gillen family home over the weekend to shovel the entire block.

[RETURN TO TOP](#) | [HOME](#)

Add some sparkle to your holidays.  
Tips, ideas, and more -- all online!



#### SECTIONS

Chicago Tribune

NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS LEISURE COMMUNITIES MARKETPLACES INTERACT

TOOLS

CUSTOMIZE HELP SEARCH SITE MAP

ADVERTISING



Would a mortgage be less than my rent?



**WIN A WEEKEND IN THE MILE HIGH CITY**

# News

News  **GO**

**Chicago Sun-Times**

[Home](#)

## Sections

[News](#)  
[Sports](#)  
[Business](#)  
[Showcase](#)  
[Columnists](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Search](#)  
[Yellow Pages](#)

## Inside News

[Architecture](#)  
[Autos](#)  
[Commentary](#)  
[Death Notices](#)  
[Elections](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Lottery](#)  
[Numbers](#)  
[News](#)  
[Politics & Government](#)  
[World News Wire](#)

## Columnists

[Kupcinet](#)  
[Mitchell](#)  
[Neal](#)  
[Novak](#)  
[Quick Takes](#)  
[Roeper](#)  
[Sneed](#)  
[Steinberg](#)  
[E-mail the News Staff](#)

[Commentary](#) [Lottery](#) [Obituaries](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

## City, colleagues mourn firefighter killed on freeway

*December 28, 2000*

BY FRANK MAIN STAFF REPORTER

Chicago firefighters in dress blues stood six deep outside a Southwest Side church Wednesday morning as Lt. Scott Gillen's casket rolled past on a fire truck to the strains of bagpipes from the Emerald Society.

Laden with flowers and draped in purple-and-black bunting, another truck, Company 49, was part of the funeral procession. The truck is based at a South Side firehouse where the 14-year veteran worked before he was promoted to lieutenant about two weeks ago.

Mayor Daley, Fire Commissioner James Joyce and Police Supt. Terry Hillard joined hundreds of white-gloved firefighters in saluting Gillen outside St. John Fisher Church in the Beverly neighborhood where the 37-year-old firefighter lived.

An honor guard representing more than a dozen suburban fire departments stood at attention as Gillen's wife, daughters and five brothers--three of whom are firefighters--wiped away tears.

"Today we grieve," Daley said during the service. "Tomorrow we move forward to make sure his death was not . . . in vain."

Gillen was killed early Saturday when an alleged drunken driver pinned his legs against a fire truck at an accident scene on the Bishop Ford Freeway. He was airlifted to Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn, where emergency worker Nancy Nunez rushed up to the helicopter.

His first words were, "How are you doing, doll?" Then he told her, "Please, I'm a fireman. Save my legs."

"I told him, 'You're a fireman with or without your legs. That's why you're on

Earth," Nunez said during the funeral service.

Gillen asked Nunez to pull a photo of his family out of his pocket and urged her to call his wife and parents. She said she took Gillen to surgery and made the sign of the cross on his forehead.

Angry firefighters have called for the driver, Carlando J. Hurt of Hammond, Ind., to receive the maximum sentence for the reckless homicide charge he faces. But the Rev. Thomas Mulcrone, a Fire Department chaplain, said anger and frustration would "disrespect the life of a man whose life was spent in the service of others."

Mulcrone emphasized Gillen's drive to be the best at anything he did, from firefighting to sports to supporting his family. "He was a fierce competitor, a man who strove to be No. 1," Mulcrone said.

The church was packed to its capacity of about 1,000 people. Hundreds of firefighters listened to the service on speakers in a basement annex. Joyce told of at least 10 firefighters who were searching for a way to help Gillen's family. They went to his home and shoveled snow from the entire block.

"If this tragedy happened to someone else, Scott would be out there with the biggest shovel," Joyce said.

During the service, one of Gillen's brothers and his stepdaughters Kelly and Kristen Conlon each gave emotional readings.

"You weren't just my little brother," said Matt Gillen, a firefighter, his voice cracking. "You were my best friend."

\*\*\*

## **Paperwork glitch gave driver Indiana license**

**BY CARLOS SADOVI STAFF REPORTER**

The man charged with crashing into and killing a Chicago firefighter was able to get an Indiana driver's license, despite his bad driving record, because of a glitch in the way Illinois reports information to a national database on bad drivers.

The case points up a loophole through which an unknown number of drivers with bad records in Illinois may have been able to get licenses in other states, authorities said Wednesday.

"It could be a national problem," said Elizabeth Kaufman, a spokeswoman for the Illinois secretary of state's office.

Carlando J. Hurt obtained his Indiana driver's license earlier this year despite

a history of driving infractions in Illinois.

Hurt had only a temporary permit in Illinois. After it expired, he was ticketed 20 times for violations including speeding and driving with an open container of alcohol.

The Illinois secretary of state's office notified the National Driver Register that Hurt was ineligible for a permit in any other state.

But the Illinois agency did not mark on its form that Hurt also was ineligible for a regular driver's license. Instead, it left the space blank because he had no license.

The computer read the blank space as meaning Hurt was eligible for a license and noted that by entering the letters "elg" in the space, Kaufman said.

That's what Indiana officials saw when they checked the national database when Hurt applied for a license in that state last May.

"This blank space not being filled out was something that slipped through the cracks. It's really unfortunate," Kaufman said.

Hurt, 26, got his Indiana license in June.

Last weekend, he was returning to his Hammond, Ind., home when he struck Chicago fire Lt. Scott Gillen, who was attending to an accident on the Bishop Ford Freeway. Police said Hurt was driving drunk and charged him with reckless homicide.

"If we had known his record as we know it now, we wouldn't have issued a license," said Alvin Hayes, spokesman for the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles. "No state would have issued it."

Despite the glitch, Illinois did list Hurt as being ineligible for a commercial driver's license, and that should have been a red flag for Indiana officials to investigate further, Kaufman said.

"The fact that it says he was not eligible for a commercial driver's license, it says to other states that it could be a problem," she said. "The burden would have been on them to research the record a little further."

Hayes disputed that: "It's not a standard practice to double-check. If the designation is 'eligible,' we take that to mean that he can have a license. No information was transmitted to us."

As a result, Illinois officials said they now are looking into changing the way information is sent to the national database and might also include more details about drivers who have permits rather than full licenses.



They also are looking into how many people might have slipped through this crack.

"We know we need to fill this blank area," Kaufman said. "Our people are looking at that now."

Meanwhile Wednesday, Hurt appeared in Traffic Court in Chicago on a warrant issued in March 1999, when he allegedly failed to appear in court for several driving violations from a 1998 traffic stop. He was ticketed for driving with a suspended license, having an open container of alcohol in his car, speeding and not wearing a seat belt, said Cook County state's attorney's spokeswoman Patti Simone.

Hurt also has two outstanding violations, each for driving with a suspended license, Simone said.

[Back to top](#) ■ [Back to News Archive](#)

**Visit Our Partners**  **GO**



[\[News\]](#) [\[Sports\]](#) [\[Business\]](#) [\[Showcase\]](#) [\[Classifieds\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#) [\[Feedback\]](#) [\[Home\]](#)

Copyright 2000, Digital Chicago Inc.



# Carlando Hurt will face charges for running down a firefighter

By Sharlonda L. Waterhouse / Staff Writer

---

HAMMOND - Carlando J. Hurt's children never got the last-minute Christmas presents he bought for them Saturday morning, family members say.

Nor did Hurt, a church deacon, get to spend Christmas as he normally does - worshipping at South Chicago's Hope Well Church, as he has since youth.

The 26-year-old Lansing native-turned Hammond resident instead was in "shock," behind jail bars, according to his father, Cartha McKenzie, also a minister.

"He never meant to run anyone over. He broke down when he heard the news. It was an accident. Now, he'll have blood on his hands forever," McKenzie said after his son's hearing on Tuesday.

Hurt was arrested and charged with reckless homicide after his vehicle ran over and killed Chicago firefighter Lt. Scott Gillen early Saturday on the Bishop Ford Expressway in Chicago.

Gillen's funeral was scheduled for 10 a.m. today.

Hurt also was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol, failing to yield to emergency vehicles, driving too fast for conditions and driving on a revoked license.

Police said Hurt was inebriated as he drove home with relatives from a shopping spree and that his blood alcohol

level registered .132 at the time of the accident. According to Illinois law, drivers with level .08 and higher are considered drunk.

A \$400,000 bail was set for Hurt, reportedly a repeat traffic offender, over the holiday.

At a court appearance Tuesday before a Cook County judge, Hurt's preliminary hearing was scheduled for Jan. 12, according to Julianna Greenspan, Hurt's attorney.

"We're still awaiting indictment by a grand jury and plan to ask the judge for a bond reduction," Greenspan said. "There's no way the family can pay what they're asking, even with community donations."

Greenspan said she and Hurt have not discussed how he will plead or what his defense will be and do not plan to do so until he is formally charged.

Hurt was originally "shaken up" when he learned he had killed someone, Greenspan said, but he was better Tuesday.

"He calmed down after seeing his family at the hearing," she said. "We're now asking that he receive medical treatment. He may have broken ribs and has been complaining about pains in his chest and legs."

McKenzie said his son has never shown signs of alcohol abuse, and Greenspan said Hurt has never been arrested before for drunken driving.

However, according to the Chicago Sun-Times, Hurt was ticketed once for driving with an open container of alcohol. The Sun-Times also reports Hurt had eight tickets for driving with a suspended license and three for driving without a license or permit.

His Illinois license was revoked, the paper reports.

Greenspan said she could not confirm the history of violations. The family is denying them.

"I just hope he's treated fairly, even though a firefighter is involved. Everything is moving so quickly," McKenzie said.

"This is a tragic case," added Greenspan. "This is the type

of accident you never want to happen the day before Christmas Eve.

"(Mr. Gillen) was a good person. What happened to him was horrible. It would also be horrible in this press-focused case for anyone to look for a scapegoat to take out their anger and frustration against. Mr. Hurt is a religious man."

McKenzie said Hurt moved to Hammond recently after leaving the Army. He works at a family owned pest control business in Chicago.

"If I could do anything to bring the firefighter back, I would. I know Carl would, too," McKenzie said.

[Back . . .](#)



Find a business:

by: ☐ type or ☐ name

City:

State:



**RETIREMENT**  
Am I saving  
enough?



# News

Architecture

**Chicago  
Sun-Times**  
Home

**Today's News**

► 7-day Archive ► Commentary ► Lottery ► Obituaries ► Printable Version

## Sections

News  
Sports  
Business  
Showcase  
Columnists  
Classifieds  
Search  
Yellow Pages

## Inside News

► Architecture  
► Autos  
► Commentary  
► Elections  
► Health  
► Lottery  
► Numbers  
► Obituaries  
► World News  
Wire

## Columnists

► Kupcinet  
► Mitchell  
► Neal  
► Novak  
► Quick Takes  
► Rosper  
► Sneed  
► Steinberg  
► E-mail the

## Joyce blasts selfish drivers

January 4, 2001

BY FRAN SPIELMAN CITY HALL REPORTER

Chicago Fire Commissioner James Joyce vowed Wednesday to launch a public awareness campaign to stop "me-first" motorists who refuse to yield to emergency vehicles.

Since Lt. Scott Gillen was killed Dec. 23 by a motorist who allegedly barreled through an emergency scene, two similar incidents have occurred.

Fortunately, firefighters involved in the two most recent accidents--one on the Northwest Side, the other on the Eisenhower Expy.--were not seriously injured. But for the grace of God, they could have followed Gillen to the grave, Joyce said.

"This goes on every day--everywhere we go. 'Everything's about me. I'm very important, so you ought to get out of my way. Your time is not important. What you do is not important.' They can't wait. There's no patience. I guess they just don't feel that what we're doing is very important because it doesn't affect them right now," Joyce said.

On the night that Gillen died, 15 firefighters worked from midnight to 2 a.m. to shovel the snow from the block where he lived in Beverly, sidewalks included, Joyce said.

"That's what firemen do. They're not looking for newspaper coverage for that stuff. They just do that. I think the rest of the damned city ought to get up off their - - - and do a little bit themselves," Joyce said.

Gillen, 37, was killed in the early hours of Dec. 23 while preparing to leave the scene of an accident on the Bishop Ford Freeway.



News Staff

Carlando Hurt, a 26-year-old Indiana man with a long history of driving violations in Illinois, allegedly tried to squeeze his car through the accident scene when his Oldsmobile pinned Gillen against the fire truck. Hurt has been charged with reckless homicide and drunken driving.

State officials are seeking to close a loophole that allowed Hurt and thousands of other Illinois drivers with bad records to obtain driver's licenses in other states.

And Police Supt. Terry Hillard has issued a general order requiring police officers to ticket motorists who disregard emergency signals. Last year, the City Council doubled the fine--from \$250 to \$500--with little or no apparent effect.

Joyce said there are not enough police officers in the city to catch all the me-first motorists. "This has got to be a public education issue. This has got to be people waking up and thinking about someone other than themselves," he said.

The public awareness campaign is already in the works. Bumper stickers will be distributed bearing the slogan, "I pull to the right for sirens and lights."

Public service announcements will be recorded and distributed to radio and television stations, possibly using members of Gillen's family, including three brothers who are Chicago firefighters.

In addition, Joyce has agreed to travel to Springfield to testify in favor of a legislative crackdown sponsored by Secretary of State Jesse White, who wants mandatory jail time for motorists who drive with suspended licenses. He also wants to empower judges to seize their license plates, immobilize their vehicles with the Denver boot or impound their cars. White also may return the favor by recording a public service announcement.

Also on Wednesday, a City Council committee agreed to acquire land for five new fire stations--including one to replace a 95-year-old North Side relic suspected of causing cancer--as aldermen from across the city demanded a piece of the action.

"I probably have two of the worst fire stations. Have you noticed that?" Ald. Dorothy Tillman (3rd) asked Joyce.

Ald. Carrie Austin (34th) said she has a fire station that's no bigger than a box of "Cracker Jacks," adding, "At what end of the chain [of priorities] is that one sitting? At the bottom?"

Without a raise in taxes, aldermen apparently will have to wait a few years for their new stations.

With the housing committee's decision to acquire land for new headquarters for Engines 38, 63, 70, 109 and 121--and similar plans in the works for Engines 84 and 102--all the money in Mayor Daley's "Neighborhoods Alive 21" program earmarked for new fire stations will be used up.

Have you  
checked  
yourself today?

**TRAVEL**  
LATEST NEWS AND ONLINE BOOKINGS

[www.search.chicago.com/travel](http://www.search.chicago.com/travel)  
**click here**

# News

Architecture

**Chicago  
Sun-Times**

[Home](#)

## Sections

[News](#)  
[Sports](#)  
[Business](#)  
[Showcase](#)  
[Columnists](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Search](#)  
[Yellow Pages](#)

## Inside News

[Architecture](#)  
[Autos](#)  
[Commentary](#)  
[Elections](#)  
[Health](#)  
[Lottery](#)  
[Numbers](#)  
[Obituaries](#)  
[World News](#)  
[Wire](#)

## Columnists

[Kupcinet](#)  
[Mitchell](#)  
[Neal](#)  
[Novak](#)  
[Quick Takes](#)  
[Roeper](#)  
[Sneed](#)  
[Steinberg](#)  
[E-mail the  
News Staff](#)

**Today's News**

[7-day Archive](#) [Commentary](#) [Lottery](#) [Obituaries](#) [Printable Version](#)

## Widow of firefighter makes plea

*January 11, 2001*

BY FRAN SPIELMAN CITY HALL REPORTER

The widow of a Chicago firefighter killed by an alleged drunken motorist issued a gut-wrenching appeal Wednesday to drivers to yield to emergency vehicles.

"My hope is there will never be another accident like the one my husband experienced Dec. 23, right before Christmas. This has changed our lives forever," said Terri Gillen, whose husband, newly promoted Lt. Scott Gillen, was run down on the Bishop Ford Freeway.

"The public needs to be more alert to what emergency workers are doing out there. If they're going to be late for work, then they need to be late for work or wherever they're going. . . . People have to put in their minds that they don't need to be there that fast if it's going to hurt somebody or somebody's family forever."

Megan Conlon, Scott Gillen's 19-year-old stepdaughter, fought back tears as she made it clear she is not prepared to forgive Carlando Hurt, the Indiana man accused of running down Gillen.

"I'm never going to see [Scott] again, and I'm never going to get to do the fun things that I did with him," said Conlon, whose tearful face, clutching her stepfather's helmet, has become ingrained in the memories of Chicagoans.

"I shouldn't be here talking about his death. I should be with him at the batting cages right now. If I don't get to do those things, I don't think that Hurt should be able to do them ever again, either."

Gillen was killed in the early-morning hours of Dec. 23 while preparing to leave the scene of an accident.

Hurt, with a long history of driving violations in Illinois, allegedly tried to squeeze his car through the accident scene and pinned Gillen against his fire

truck. Hurt, 26, has been charged with reckless homicide and drunken driving.

State officials are seeking to close a loophole that allowed Hurt and thousands of other Illinois drivers with bad records to obtain driver's licenses in other states.

On Wednesday, the City Council paid an emotional tribute to Gillen, whose father and three brothers are all Chicago firefighters.

"It isn't supposed to happen this way. . . . To have a firefighter die because [of] a drunk driver trying to speed by an accident scene is impossible to accept," Ald. Edward M. Burke (14th) said.

Ald. Richard Mell (33rd) warned that there will be "more tragedies to come" unless motorists wake up and "go back to civility--the way we used to behave--instead of trying to beat that siren."

City Hall has launched a public awareness campaign and a crackdown to stop motorists who refuse to yield to emergency vehicles. The first \$500 ticket was issued last week to a parochial school teacher in a hurry to get to the classroom.

After the moving tribute, Terri Gillen held a news conference flanked by her five daughters, Brianne, Kelly, Kristen, Megan and Moira; her parents, Robert and Joan Gorman; Scott's parents, Don and Marian Gillen, and Scott's four brothers, Matthew, Donald, Luke and Mark.

She thanked the rescue workers for making a valiant effort to save her husband's life. She thanked the close-knit fraternity of firefighters and paramedics--and the entire city, including total strangers--for wrapping their arms around her grieving family.

"I thought we were always just part of an anonymous Fire Department family. . . . I'm just so amazed by the tributes being paid to my husband by all the firefighters, my new family. I'll not ever forget the kind of support they've given me," she said.

Terri Gillen said her only concern right now is the "emotional well-being of my own family, getting my girls back to school in a solid emotional state, raising my 10-year-old girl as a father and mother figure."

Although Scott's brothers will be "surrogate fathers" to her children, the void will be impossible to fill, Terri Gillen said.

"If there's one word that sums up my husband, other than the love he provided for our family, it was the energy. He was the energy in our house--in our lives. We've lost his energy," she said.



Good evening, St. Louis | Sunday, Jan. 28, 2001

[Sections](#) | [A&E](#) | [Business](#) | [Communities](#) | [News](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Sports](#) | [Help](#) | [My postnet.com](#)
[Path](#) | [Home](#) >> [News](#) >> [Wire feeds](#) >> [Wire story](#)
[Index](#) | [Archives](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact](#) | [Extras](#) | [Forums](#) | [Guides](#) | [News Links](#) | [Register](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Special Reports](#) | [Today's Post](#) | [Weather](#) | [Wires](#) | [Yellow Pages](#)
[E-mail this URL](#) to a friend | [Add to My Links](#)
[Go to](#) | [Previous story](#) | [Next story](#) | [Main view](#)

## Motorists ignore pose great danger to emergency workers

Jan. 28, 2001 | 3:20 p.m.

By **DON BABWIN** Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO (AP) -- Speeding toward a disabled car on a Chicago expressway, state trooper Mike Karpinski points to a motorist cutting in front of him, apparently oblivious to his cruiser's flashing emergency lights and blaring siren.

"Look at that," he says. "You can count on one hand the number of cars that did the right thing" by pulling to the right. "And we just went by, what, 300 cars?"

Karpinski remembers what a training officer told him five years ago: He has a better chance of being struck by a car than a bullet.

"You take your life in your hands out here," he says.

Consider what has happened in the Chicago area in little more than a month.

On Dec. 23, Chicago Fire Department Lt. Scott Gillen was killed by a car that authorities say roared past flares and emergency lights at the scene of an accident and crushed him against the back of a fire truck.

Days later a Kankakee County sheriff's deputy was struck and critically injured while helping a tow truck driver on the side of a road. And, in separate incidents in a span of 12 hours, another Chicago firefighter and a paramedic also were hit by vehicles.

"It's definitely getting more dangerous," Chicago Fire Commissioner James Joyce says.

### News forums

- [Ask Conan](#)
- [Ask the Help Desk](#)
- [Bill McClellan](#)
- [Chalkboard](#)
- [Current Affairs](#)
- [Editorial Page](#)
- [Faith Forum](#)
- [Going Places](#)
- [Greg Freeman](#)
- [MediaCheck](#)
- [Voice Your Choice](#)

### Local businesses

- [Apparel](#)
- [Auto](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Computers-Internet](#)
- [Dining & Entertainment](#)
- [Health -- General](#)
- [Home & Real Estate](#)
- [Hotels & Travel](#)
- [Insurance](#)
- [Money & Law](#)
- [Shops & Services](#)
- [Sports & Recreation](#)

### In News

- [Editorial](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Headlines](#)
- [Health and Science](#)
- [Imagine St. Louis](#)
- [P-D Columnists](#)
- [Current features](#)
- [News of the Weird](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [AP Wire](#)
- [Ill. Lottery](#)
- [Mo. Lottery](#)
- [TWA](#)
- [Weatherbird](#)
- [Ann Landers](#)
- [Ashcroft](#)
- [Census 2000](#)
- [Dear Abby](#)
- [Election 2000](#)
- [Stressed Out Stadium](#)
- [Disabilities](#)
- [Schools Guide](#)

Search section

[Advanced Search](#)





``Drivers are much more in a hurry and much more self-centered," Joyce says. ``And they're driving 3,000-pound home entertainment centers with cell phones."

And roadways are more crowded than ever -- 9.4 million registered cars and trucks in Illinois in 1999 compared to 7.9 million 10 years earlier. ``We have near misses every day," Joyce said.

The story is much the same elsewhere.

``It's nerve-racking just to get to the scene of a fire," says Ray Sneed, president of the firefighters union in Washington, D.C. ``The community as a whole has gotten to the point where they ignore warning devices the same way they ignore traffic lights."

Motorists often treat police the way they treat anyone else they think is blocking their way, said Steve MacDonald, spokesman for the Boston Fire Department.

``Sometimes they hit the accelerator or drive over our hoses," he said.

To protect themselves, emergency crews position their vehicles ``so if a drunk comes down the road they will slam into the truck before they slam into you," MacDonald says. ``I'm not sure years ago they had to think of that."

It's not clear if the problem is getting worse, although some figures suggest it is. Last year, 20 police officers died after being struck by vehicles while outside their squad cars, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

That was twice as high as 1999 but it was the seventh year out of the past century that as many as 20 officers were killed that way.

And fatal accidents are just a fraction of the total involving emergency vehicles. In Illinois alone, 162 state police cars were involved in crashes from January 1998 through December, and 88 were parked with their emergency lights flashing.

State police Sgt. Joe Donley has been hit nine times -- once outside his squad car and eight times sitting in it. Not once was his car moving.

``You get to the point no matter how safe you think you are, there are certain things you can't predict," says Donley, who would have been at the scene where Gillen was killed had he not been out of state that night. ``It could have easily been me or the guys I worked with."



``I'm amazed by how many troopers are killed strictly in accidents," said Sgt. Don Birdsong of the Arkansas State Police.

It's not just emergency vehicles that are at risk. Plowing snow can be particularly treacherous.

``We have big orange trucks with flashing strobe lights all over them and people are running into the back of them," Illinois Department of Transportation spokesman Dick Adorjan said. Already this winter 45 snow plows have been hit, compared with 39 all last winter, he said.

After a Chicago firefighter was killed last spring by a pickup truck that ran a stop sign and rammed a fire truck, City Council doubled to \$500 the maximum fine for failing to yield to an emergency vehicle. After Gillen's death last month, the police department stepped up its efforts to write those tickets.

``People need to understand when we have the lights on it's an emergency," says Karpinski. ``It's not like we turn those on to go get doughnuts."

AP-CS-01-28-01 1607EST

Go to | [Previous story](#) | [Next story](#) | [Main view](#)

---

All postnet.com sections... ▾

GO

[Top of the page](#) | [Back to postnet.com home](#)  
[E-mail the editor](#) | [About the section](#) | [Toolbox](#)  
[postnet.com's Privacy Policy](#)

[Subscribe to the Post-Dispatch](#)  
[E-mail this URL to a friend](#) | [Advertising information](#)

POSTNET® is a registered trademark used under license from  
PostNet International Franchise Corporation. | [postnet.net](#)

© 2001 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, [postnet.com](#)



- ◀ News
- ◀ Sports
- ◀ Business
- ◀ Classifieds
- ◀ Entertainment/Lifestyles
- ◀ Opinion/Letters
- ◀ About Us
- ◀ Archive Information
- ◀ Southtown Home



## ▲ News

# News Digest

*Saturday, February 17, 2001*

---

## Chicago

---

### Hurt case reassigned

The case of Carlando Hurt, the Hammond man who struck and killed a Chicago firefighter, is being reassigned after the judge on the case recused herself.

Judge Colleen McSweeney Moore asked that the case be removed from her courtroom, but did not say why, according to a spokeswoman for the Cook County state's attorney's office.

The case is scheduled to be assigned to a different judge Feb. 21 by Judge Paul Biebel, the presiding judge of the Criminal Court building.

A spokesman for Biebel said the presiding judge's office does not know why Moore recused herself and said she does not have to make the reason public.

Hurt is charged with reckless homicide in the Dec. 23, 2000, death of 37-year-old fire Lt. Scott Gillen, who was killed at an accident scene on the Bishop Ford Freeway. Hurt's car struck Gillen as the firefighter closed up a fire truck.

Hurt's blood-alcohol content was above the legal limit of 0.08 at the time of the accident, police said.

—Alice Hohl

---