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Firefighter Risk & Resilience Study Newsletter Spring 2021



Black Female Firefighter Shines in Women's History Month



<https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/news/local/volusia/2021/03/29/daytona-beach-first-black-female-firefighter-honored/7050684002/>

Women have been firefighters for much longer than most people may realize, over 200 years to be exact. Molly Williams was the first known female firefighter in the United States. Formerly a slave, Molly worked on Oceanus Engine Company #11 in New York City. In 1818 she proved herself to be "as good a fire laddie as many of the boys" when a fire broke out and she was the only person at the fire station able to rush to the rescue, as everyone else had come down with the flu. It was on that day that she earned the title of "Volunteer No. 11," as the rest of the fire department bestowed it upon her.

This year on March 30th, Alicia Shepard continued Williams' legacy during Women's History Month as she earned the title of Daytona Beach's first Black female firefighter. Shepard's dream of becoming a firefighter began when a firefighter truck rushed to extinguish a

blaze at her elementary school. At age 33, Shepard's dream has come true after decades of hard work and dedication. Both the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters and the Precise Professional Firefighters of Daytona Beach recognized Shepard for her historical achievement. The vice president of the latter organization, Gabriel Shuler, stated that "we would like to show a special recognition of a homegrown hero, a young woman that has overcome personal challenges in pursuit to attain a lifetime goal and become the first to do so."

Shepard has indeed faced many challenges in her life along her way to becoming a firefighter. After graduating from high school in 2006, Shepard intended to attend Daytona State College's firefighter training program but had no guidance or tuition money to begin her journey.

Not only did she not have the funds, but also the career center she reached out to actually discouraged her from joining the fire department. This left Shepard to turn to cosmetology school as an alternative.

After becoming a mother of three, working in landscaping, and attending school to become an emergency medical technician, Shepard finally reached her goal of obtaining her firefighter education and training. The process was grueling, but Shepard persisted in pursuit of her dream and is now being trained as a paramedic. Shepard's new goal is to become a lieutenant in the fire department and begin a program to encourage kids to consider a career as a firefighter, just as she did so many years ago.

<https://www.thehistoryreader.com/historical-figures/black-firefighters/>
<https://www.wesh.com/article/first-black-female-daytona-beach-firefighter-honored/35985274>

What's New at the WRI?

The WRI welcomes a new research assistant and a new practicum student!

Jordan Smith

Jordan joined the WRI in February 2021 as a Clinical Research Assistant. She graduated from Baylor University with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health in May 2019 and is completing her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology degree. In her time at Baylor University, she worked closely with the Department of Public Health and the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences studying topics including physical activity among adults with functional limitations, exercise prescriptions through the Family Health Center, and firefighter exposure to carcinogens through occupational risks.

Jordan plans to pursue a Doctorate in Epidemiology in order to further study firefighters' occupational risks. Her experience with firefighters, both personally through her family and professionally through her work, has inspired her to find a solution to the ever-growing problem of firefighter cancer. In her free time, Jordan enjoys hiking, running, country dancing, baking, and spending time with her niece and nephews.

Rudney Danquah

Rudney joined the WRI team in September of 2020. She received her B.S. in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from Virginia Tech in 2015 and her M.Ed. in Professional Counseling from the University of Oklahoma in 2017. She is currently a fourth-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Texas A&M University. Prior to joining WRI, Rudney has provided counseling for children with a history of trauma and in different settings such as community mental health, university counseling and with veteran's affairs. Her clinical interests include trauma recovery and working with underserved populations. She enjoys watching reruns of the Golden Girls and completing jigsaw puzzles and sudoku in her spare time.

Fun Spring Recipe!

Ruby Red Grapefruit Tartlets

Crust Ingredients:

2 1/4 sticks unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/2 c confectioners' sugar
Pinch kosher salt
1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Filling Ingredients:

1 c plus 2 tbsp granulated sugar
6 tbsp all-purpose flour
3 tbsp cornstarch
1/2 tsp kosher salt
4 large egg yolks
1 1/2 tbsp finely grated ruby red grapefruit zest
plus 1 1/2 cups juice

Instructions:

- 1. Make crust:** Using electric mixer, beat butter, confectioners' sugar and salt in large bowl until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes; beat in vanilla. Reduce speed, add flour and mix until just combined.
- 2. Divide dough** in half and roll each half between 2 pieces of parchment to 1/8 inch thick. Cut each piece in half and fit into bottom and up sides of two 4-inch tart pans with removable bottoms. Poke bottoms with fork and refrigerate until firm, 15 to 20 minutes. Repeat, rerolling scraps of dough if necessary and fitting into 4 more tart pans for a total of 8.
- 3. Heat oven** to 400°F. Place tart pans on 2 rimmed baking sheets and bake tart shells until beginning to turn light golden around edges, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool. Lower oven temp to 325°F.
- 4. Make filling:** In large bowl, whisk together sugar, flour, cornstarch and salt. Add egg yolks and grapefruit zest and juice and whisk to combine. Divide among tart shells and bake until set, rotating positions of sheets on racks halfway through, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool to room temp, then refrigerate until chilled, at least 3 hours or up to overnight.
- 5. When ready to serve,** make topping: In large metal or glass bowl, whisk together egg whites, sugar and cream of tartar. Set bowl over saucepan of simmering water (without touching water) and cook, whisking constantly, until sugar has dissolved and egg whites are very warm to the touch, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and, using electric mixer, beat on low speed, gradually increasing speed to high, until stiff, glossy peaks form, about 6 minutes. Beat in vanilla.



Spotlight on Service

In our newsletters, we highlight firefighter service outside the line of duty from the cities in our study. In this newsletter, we focus on Providence, RI.



<https://upriseri.com/2021-03-09-providence-submarine-fire/>

Providence Fire Department Puts Out Submarine Fire

On Monday, March 8th at 9:34 am, the Providence Fire Department responded to reports of black smoke filling the air from RI Recycled Metals, an unlicensed scrap yard. When firefighters arrived on the scene, they found a decommissioned Russian submarine ablaze in the Port of Providence. The submarine, which was once featured in the Harrison Ford movie *K-19: The Widowmaker*, was briefly a floating museum before it sank in a storm. Underwater for years, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management ordered the unlicensed RI Recycled Metals to remove the submarine from the water and scrap it. The process was underway when a rubber

seal inside the metal of the submarine hull ignited while workers cut the hull in pieces with welding torches.

Providence Fire Chief Stephen Capracotta said one firefighter suffered a minor injury, otherwise, no one was hurt. However, the fire in the Port, and the black smoke in the air, worried Washington Park residents, an area that already suffers from some of the highest asthma rates in all of New England and the United States. Residents around the Port have long been calling for an end to the toxic businesses that have greatly increased by the Bay in Providence. They recall a list of disasters and near-disasters over the past six years, including an ethanol train derailment, a fuel truck overturning and spilling its contents, and a gas pipeline explosion behind a club.

One year ago, there was a successful neighborhood effort to oppose yet another toxic industry, a garbage transfer station. “This is why we need bold legislation to change the port now,” said Monica Huertas, a long-time environmental justice activist who leads the People’s Port Authority. Providence City Councilmember Pedro Espinal also released a statement congratulating the firefighters on a job well done, but also called for change. “Today’s fire was yet another example of why I have been advocating for eliminating these types of businesses in South Providence, and indeed the whole city,” Espinal stated. Residents say they will continue to fight for the health of their community and ensuring the safety of Providence residents for generations to come.

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