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Omaha firefighters honor those who have died

A ceremony to honor firefighters who have died had the feeling of a family reunion today at the Firefighters Union Hall.

During a ceremony attended by about 100 people, Mayor Mike Fahey and U.S. Rep. Lee Terry both thanked the families of 15 retired firefighters who have died in the past two years.

"Today, the message is you're not alone," Terry said. "You have not only your family of firefighters, but you have an entire community to help bear your loss."

A selection of patriotic and religious songs sung a cappella by Omaha Firefighter Scott Wachter was another highlight of the 10 a.m. service. A huge American flag strung between two ladder trucks provided a canopy as guests left.

Retired Firefighter Steve Franson attended to honor his father, Capt. Harry Franson, who died this year at age 77. He was one of the family members who accepted a rose in honor of their loved ones.

"Being retired, you don't miss the job as much as you miss the guys you worked with," he said. "It's helpful to know so many people care. . . . It really is like a family."

