

Robert Tran
Professional Firefighter since 2000

Prior to meeting Russell Hayden, I knew very little about the fire service.

Through meeting with him I was able to become a part of the San Jose Fire Department Recruitment Internship Program, which he was the head of.

This program allowed me the opportunity to learn about the fire service from an inside prospective.

He familiarized me and helped me understand not only the line personnel duties, but also the administrative side of the fire service, giving me a broader understanding in general.

I believe this helped me become a better candidate as well as a better firefighter today.

He helped guide me though each process of becoming a firefighter from the initial testing process up to the day I was given a badge.

Within a year of meeting Russell Hayden, I was hired with the San Jose Fire Department.

Working with Russell Hayden directly helped me get to where I am today.



“I am A Firefighter”

I have been in this profession for 20 years. Growing up as a Vietnamese American, I can honestly say that this was not a career path that I had considered early in life. Public service was not a desired profession in my culture. I am very fortunate in the fact that my parents were very supportive of my decision to follow this goal of becoming a professional Firefighter.

From the time I learned about what this job entailed; I knew this was the path I wanted to take. I wanted a job that kept me active. A career that would challenge both my mind and body. I wanted to be able to help people and feel good about doing so. I wanted a job that I could feel proud to be doing and go home knowing that I made a difference. I wanted to feel like a positive contributor to society and more than anything else, I wanted my parents to be proud of me.

The career of a Firefighter is all of those things. We do make a big difference on a daily basis. When people call for help, we are there to provide it. We are there for the public when they need us the most. It is an amazing feeling to know that we can make a difference in a person's life.

My entire family was very supportive of my decision to follow this career. They knew it would be a good fit for me. I call it a career because it is so much more than a job. When you are lucky enough to be a part of this group of people, you are signing onto a second family.

You end up spending one third of your life with your fellow co-workers and they become your brothers and sisters. You rely on them to keep you safe and protected as they rely on you for the same. This type of bond is built on trust and loyalty and is forged by fire. It takes a special type of person to do what it is we do for a living. You can never truly understand until you are a part of it.

This job has provided me a good income for my family. Although I will never be rich, and I will never make the type of money that my friends in the tech industry make, I will have a good and steady income for the rest of my life. I am able to afford a nice home in a good neighborhood, drive cars that I don't have to worry about them breaking down all the time, take my family on vacations and I am able to afford nice things for my family. They never have to want for anything.

This career has been a blessing for me and I could never imagine doing anything else. You would be hard pressed to find a Firefighter who does not say that they love what they do for a living. In fact, if I could choose all over again in life. If I could do anything I wanted as a career, I would still choose the job of a Firefighter. It is truly rewarding work. I am proud to tell people what I do for a living. When I retire from this career, I will be even more proud to tell people what I was. I am a proud professional Firefighter.

Captain Robert Tran – San Jose Fire Department

Written - Circa 2019