

# Praise Chief For Service; Station Open

This will be a year to remember in the annals of Birmingham's fast growing fire department, with two new fire halls and a retiring fire chief giving the year 1955 prominent local historical value.

First in significance was last week's announcement from Chief Vernon W. Griffith, that after 32 years with Birmingham fire fighters, he will officially retire August 27.

May 12, 1955, will stand out as the first day the fire department occupied its new quarters at Chesterfield and W. Maple since establishment by the city July 1, 1927. Another fire hall at Adams and Bowers, will be ready for opening in about a month.

These events will constitute a transitional era for the Birmingham fire department.

IN HIS 32 years as fireman, 24 of them as chief, "Vern" Griffith has become a symbol to the firemen of Michigan.

Chief John Schroeder, a fireman with 44 years of service with the Pontiac fire department, said he had "the greatest admiration for Chief Griffith" and was "extremely sorry that Birmingham will lose such a wonderful person."

"I know, however, that the Griffith tradition will be continued in the fine leadership of new chief Park Smith," said Schroeder.

GRIFFITH'S retirement came as a surprise to Hazel Park Fire Chief Frank S. Durbin, president of the mutual aid pact of fire chiefs of Oakland county.

"Vern was highly instrumental in bringing about this mutual aid pact, and in my 12 years of association with him I have never known a finer person," said Chief Durbin.

Royal Oak Fire Chief Clyde Wray said, "I have known Chief Griffith for more than 10 years, and I am very sorry to see him go. He has made the Birmingham fire department one of the finest



CHESTERFIELD CREW DEPARTS FOR NEW WESTSIDE QUARTERS

Eastside group waves goodbye, awaits own move to new facilities in the country.

ASSISTANT Chief Park Smith, who will succeed Griffith, moved into his office at the new Chesterfield station last week.

"I am extremely proud to have served under such a great person," said Smith, "and I will do my utmost to carry on his tradition."

In the new westside station, presently occupied by two trucks and an emergency car, five firemen have been assigned as its first occupants.

A MODERN 20-bed dormitory, kitchen and dining room are among the modern facilities of the new station.

Until the opening of the Bowers-Adams station, the eastside crew will continue to operate out of the city hall headquarters.

Space in the city hall later will be converted into offices.

The Chesterfield station will contain administrative offices, with Bowers-Adams designated a dispatch station.



ALL-PURPOSE TRUCK BACKS INTO NEW STALL. At city's new main station (Eccentric Photos)

## Arrest Detroit Man For Stealing Auto

A 26-year-old Detroit, arrested in Birmingham May 14 for investigation of auto theft, will appear in Oakland County circuit court May 23 for arraignment on the charge.

Walter Rollings, the accused, was arrested on S. Adams road by Patrolman Donald Moomen, in a car which police said was stolen earlier that day in Oak Park.

Justice William Nern of Oak Park Monday set bond at \$1,000 after Rollings waived examination.

## Gorillas Play On Sculpture By Fredericks

Gorillas will swing and play with themselves and generally have many activities, due to Marshall Fredericks' sculptured furniture in the Hilden Amphitheatre that was dedicated yesterday afternoon at the Detroit Zoo.

Where zoo equipment for such animals has previously been only cement floor and blocks, now Fredericks has pioneered in brilliant colored laminated fiberglass, molded into usable shapes and used with stainless steel.

Museum officials from other cities have already noted and praised the innovation in zoo cage furniture.

THE ZOO, WHICH opens today, now features the amphitheatre, where 2500 people may sit to watch the three gorillas, two orangutans,

one gibbon, and the chimpanzee Jo Mend II in activities. Other than the retired Jo, too elderly for activities, the animals will stage shows in the theatre.

In another section, their cages are soundproofed with spots for visitors to watch them sleep, play on the swings, slides, the merry-go-round all equipment designed by the Birmingham sculptor.

"THE ANIMALS seem delighted," Fredericks says, explaining that besides being adequate playthings, the steel and glass allow easy washing, since the animals are extremely susceptible to disease.

First sculpture in laminated fiberglass was done by Fredericks for the Ford Rotunda.

## Assessments Ready

Assessment roll confirmation hearings on two projects have been set for Tuesday, May 31, before the Birmingham city commission. They are for paving an access drive on Hunter from Hazel to the three gorillas, two orangutans,

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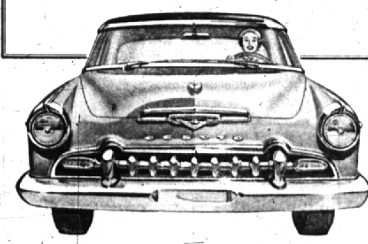
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