

# Comr. Quinn hailed as 'a fireman's fireman'

Mayor Bilandic, commenting Friday on the death late Thursday of Robert J. Quinn, called the former fire commissioner "one of Chicago's outstanding public servants."

Bilandic pointed out that a plaque hanging in the Robert J. Quinn Academy, 558 W. De-Koven, calls Mr. Quinn "the best and most courageous and most talented fire fighter anywhere in the world."

Chicago fire fighters agreed Friday.

**THEY CALLED** Mr. Quinn, fire chief from 1957 until 1978, "a fireman's fireman."

"I worked with Bob Quinn 10 years," said Capt. Charles Conrad of the Fire Prevention

Bureau. "He was one hell of a fireman. He was always where the action was. He never asked the men to go where he wouldn't go."

"He was one of the great fire fighters who ever lived. He had an ability to lead men at fires. He knew buildings and how they were constructed. He knew how to lead men into buildings and how to get them out and when to get them out," said Acting First Division Chief Ernest Pentek.

"I just knew of him," said Acting 2d Division Chief Fran Enright. "I didn't personally know him. But I respected his ability and decisions at fires. I felt I was in good hands. He was always out for the safety of his men,

watching out that none of us got into a bad situation. It was a relief, pleasure to see him on the scene. You knew he knew what he was doing."

**BILANDIC PRAISED** Mr. Quinn, who died at age 73 while vacationing in Florida, for establishing the Chicago Fire Department as a leader in the nation for "fire-fighting techniques, equipment and spirit."

"He was a great innovator," Pentek said. "He started the snorkel squads. He started Big John and Big Moe for the big fires. He was the first one to have helicopters in the fire department."

"He was progressive," Conrad said. "The snorkel was his baby. He was aware of the potential of that type equipment. He was more and more worried about vacant buildings. He wanted more and more monitor nozzles on exteriors so the men wouldn't have to go into an empty building on fire. He also didn't like trussed roofs—half-moon shaped roofs like you find in automobile agencies. He didn't want men inside them."

"He was for the men. He was interested in their safety and their working conditions. He was called the fireman's fireman because he did care," said a fire fighter at Engine House 126 said.