

Rick Martinez
Fire Chief Emeritus

Rick Martinez has over forty years in public safety service. Rising through the ranks he served in nearly every fire operational and administrative position to include twelve years as fire chief. During his tenure as fire chief, he guided the consolidation of multiple fire departments forming the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, the seventh largest local fire department in the State of California and established the first local government wildland helicopter program in northern California.

Prior to joining the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, Chief Martinez served twenty-one years with the Sacramento City Fire Department. He was instrumental in the establishment and management of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue Task Force and served as the Urban Search and Rescue Task Force Leader in response to the Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City in April 1995.

In 2000, he was selected as one of three national search and rescue Incident Support Team Leaders for FEMA in which he was responsible for the management and direction of all FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Teams in several national disasters to include; Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi, Hurricane Rita, the World Trade Center Incident in New York on September 11, 2001 and the 2002 Salt Lake Olympics.

In July 2003, Chief Martinez was named as the first Chief Deputy Director, an appointee of Governor Gray Davis, to the California Office of Homeland Security (OHS). In November 2003, he was appointed to the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission by Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger to provide a thorough review of the Southern California wildfires of 2003. He also served as the interim Director of OHS for Governor Schwarzenegger. In 2003, he was selected as the Fire Chief of the Year by the California Fire Chief's Association.

Following his initial retirement in 2005 from the fire service he served as the Chief of Emergency Services for the Sacramento City and County Office of Emergency Services and the Yolo County Office of Emergency Services, served as the interim Fire Chief of the City of West Sacramento, performed efficiency reviews for: California Fire & Rescue Training Authority, University of California at Davis, Placer County (CA), Washoe County (NV) and the Hellenic Fire Corp in Greece.

From 2020 to 2025, he served as the Executive Director of the California Fire Foundation (CFF), a state-wide 501c3, that serves fallen firefighter's families, ill or injured firefighters and the communities they serve. During his tenure at the CFF he expanded their community granting program and as well as programmatic expansion to their programs for injured firefighters.

He founded and serves as the chairman of the Carolyn Martinez Private Foundation assisting cancer survivors and supporting local animal cruelty prevention organizations. He also serves as a Board Member of the California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee and is a Board Member for Improve Your Tomorrow, an organization that focuses on increasing the number of young men of color graduating from colleges and universities.

Chief Martinez received his Associate of Arts Degree in Fire Technology and completed his Bachelor's Degree in Vocational and Adult Education. He is also a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.