



CITY OF ATLANTA

NEWS RELEASE

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STATEMENT BY MAYOR IVAN ALLEN; ALDERMAN WILLIAM T. KNIGHT, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF FIREMASTERS; AND CHIEF C. H. HILDEBRAND, ATLANTA FIRE DEPARTMENT -- THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 1966, 11:30 A. M.

More than 500 Atlanta firemen continue to refuse to report for duty as directed by order of the Fulton Superior Court and by the authorities of the City of Atlanta and the Atlanta Fire Department. The City Attorney's office has asked the Court this morning to cite the Atlanta Firefighters Union, Independent, and its principal officers, J. I. Martin and Leonard Styron, for civil contempt and failure to return to duty as ordered.

The City of Atlanta has made every attempt to resolve the present dilemma with the members of the Fire Department through these men who are the representatives of the striking firemen. We have done as much as is possible under the laws governing the City of Atlanta.

The Union leaders and striking firemen have shown an utter contempt for the laws of the State of Georgia and the authority of the City of Atlanta. They have also shown a reckless disregard for the property and lives of the citizens of this city.

We can no longer tolerate action which places in jeopardy the thousands of lives and millions of dollars of property which these men are under sworn oath to protect. Therefore, we are directing all employees of the Atlanta Fire Department who wish to remain as employees of the City to report to duty on their normal shifts no later than 8:00 a.m. Saturday. Failure to report will be considered a violation of the City's Civil Service Law and

will be used as the basis of charges to be preferred for inattention to or dereliction of duty. Employees failing to report will be suspended by the Chief pending the hearings and action will be taken to fill those positions which remain vacant. We urge these employees to consider their responsibilities to the people of Atlanta and to their own families. Loss of income and the placing in jeopardy of many years of retirement rights and other accumulated benefits is a serious and foolish gamble they are taking by refusing to return to their posts.

The City officials have met with the leaders of the Union in good faith. These leaders have stated that they have asked the firemen to obey the legal authority of the Court and return to their stations but there has been no response to this request from the Union leadership. Apparently, there are no lines of communications now open with Union authority accepted by its members.

Capt. Martin and Capt. Styron apparently have no control over the striking members because their request has been ignored. These two men also have failed to comply with their own request and have not reported to their duty stations.

We trust that the members of the Fire Department, many of whom have worked long years of dedicated service, will consider their responsibilities and obligations to the City, the laws of our State, and to their families and return to work as directed.