

# Constitution & By-Laws



## **ARTICLE I**

**Section 1.** The name of the association shall be the  
“COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION, FIRE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK”

## **ARTICLE II**

**Section 1.** The object of this association shall be:

To promote and provide opportunities for the social and fraternal betterment amongst the members thereof in an atmosphere of good fellowship and spirit of brotherhood.

To encourage and promote a high level of professional conduct and of competence and skill in the performance of their professional duties

To foster, amongst the members, a keen awareness of their responsibilities as citizens and as members of the New York City Fire Department.

To make every endeavor to secure uniformity and certainty of the privileges and rights for the members, in order that their dignity and repute may not suffer.

**Section 2.** The association shall have an official seal, with an appropriate device, approved and adopted by the association, which shall be affixed to all official documents and papers issued by and under the authority of this association, and its executives; an impression of which seal, duly attested, shall be recognized and acknowledged when stamped.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The officers of this association shall be:

President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 3rd Vice President (to be a retired member), Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Recording and Corresponding Secretary, Sergeant at Arms (the number of which shall be designated by the Board of Directors), and five (5) Trustees, one for each Borough. These officers shall be elected for a term of three (3) years. Any active member (uniformed only) of the New York City Fire Department and this association in good financial standing for five (5) consecutive preceding years prior to nomination shall be eligible for any of the aforementioned officers, except for President. The office of President must be a person (Active Uniform Only) that has held an executive board position for any prior term for at least three (3) years.

**Section 2.** Nominations for office in the association shall be made at the regular meeting held in October, every three (3) years in the first year commencing in the October of the year this amendment is passed (1991). Any member in good financial standing may present the name of any other member (also in good standing) and properly seconded, as a candidate for office. Nominations may be also made by registered mail on condition that written communication to that effect, properly seconded, and notarized, shall have been received by the recording secretary at least seven (7) days prior to the October meeting. It shall be incumbent upon the member making any nomination for office to confirm in writing.

All candidates for office shall confirm, their acceptance to run for the office for which they were nominated. Confirmation of acceptance shall be delivered to the recording secretary within seven (7) days after the October meeting.

If there be only one (1) candidate nominated for any office and said nominee accepts, he shall be declared elected. If more than one candidature is nominated for any office, voting shall take place as follows:

1. Formation of committee to mail and count ballots shall include a Chairman of the ballot committee, who shall be selected from the membership by the president and approved by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors meeting in an election year. All members nominated for office shall be included in this committee and members so nominated may request one member in good standing to assist in the mailing and counting of the ballots. Nominated members (or representatives) shall be present at the mailing and counting to assist the committee in the process of mailing and counting of ballots. Each nominee will be required to sign a statement, upon accepting the nomination, to have his name withdrawn from nomination and removed from the ballot if he is not represented at these meetings. No other business other than the mailing and addressing of the Official Ballots and envelopes shall be done at this meeting.

2. Construction of the ballot (by the committee). Incumbent's name shall appear first on the ballot and shall be so indicated. All other candidates will be listed in the order in

which they were nominated. No other designation other than the member's name shall appear on the ballot.

3. Ballots shall be mailed to all members in good standing (as defined in Section 1) within twenty-one (21) days after the October regular membership meeting. Ballots for the office of 3rd Vice President shall only be mailed to retired members in good standing. Ballots for the office of Borough Trustee shall be mailed to members in good standing who are assigned to Units of the Borough the Trustee will represent.

4. Ballots must be returned by Five p.m. (1700 hours) of December first (1st), in order to be counted, all ballots returned after that time will be declared invalid.

5. All ballots received shall be in the possession of the Chairman of the ballot Committee. He shall select the time and place for the counting of ballots and the results shall be turned over to the President at the regular meeting in December following the election.

6. The results of the voting shall be announced by the President at the December regular membership meeting.

7) The candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall assume their respective offices on the first day of January in the year following the election

8) The files of this Association shall not be released for any reason. During the course of an election, a candidate desiring to mail campaign literature, may request the names and address involved for the office he has been nominated for. They must be made available. The president will arrange a time and place for this purpose. The names and addresses must be placed directly on sealed envelopes containing the campaign material. Immediately upon completion, the candidate and a member of the board of directors selected by the chairman shall then mail campaign material to the member's home.

9) Upon acceptance of nomination for any office in this Association, the nominee shall pledge not to, in any manner, distribute any type of campaign material to anyone other than mailing said material to a member's home as per Article III Section 8. This statement shall be included in the acceptance pledge of the nominee.

The Committee for Elective Posts shall be as follows:

1. All members of the board of Directors
2. The candidates running for office and/or their chosen representatives.
3. A Chairman appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors.
4. Any other members deemed necessary by the President and approved by the Board of Directors.

**Section 3.** Whenever vacancies occur in any of the different elected officers of the Association, the remaining officers shall have the power to select the member to fill such

vacancy or vacancies until the next “general election”, except as provided in *Article v Section 2* Two-thirds of the remaining Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the filling of said vacancies which shall be by a majority vote.

**Section 4.** Officers of the Executive Board shall attend all Executive Board and Regular Membership meetings, If any officer shall absent himself from three (3) meetings consecutively. (Executive Board and/or regular Membership meeting), his office shall be declared vacant, unless such absence is caused through the performance of duty, or sickness or other extenuating circumstances that prevent him from attending. The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of attendance and the Board of Directors shall be notified of such absence, said Board shall cause an investigation to be made to determine the reason for non-attendance and vote for removal from office or excuse for non-attendance.

4.1) All elected Board positions except 3rd Vice President (retired member representative) shall be vacated on the date of retirement. The date of retirement shall be when such is published on the New York City Fire Department, Department Order.

**Section 5.** The term of all officers shall be for three (3) years or until their successors shall take office.

**Section 6.** Twenty-five (25) or more members in good standing, including eight (8) members of the Board of Directors, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**Section 7.** Meetings shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month, with the exception of the months of July and August. If matters of importance arise in the meantime, a special meeting may be held at the call of the Chair.

**Section 8.** Any member holding office in this Association who may vacate his office for any reason shall immediately prepare all books, papers, records, etc., to be examined by the Board of Trustees, consisting of the five Borough Trustees and chaired by the 1st Vice President when, upon their report, such office shall be declared vacant.

**Section 9.** The President, Vice Presidents, Recording and Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, the five Borough Trustees, and Sergeants at Arms shall constitute the Board of Directors.

**Section 10.** A meeting of the Board of Directors as composed in *Section 9* shall be held at least one week prior to each regularly scheduled meeting or special meeting. (A

quorum shall be, one more than 1/2 of the elected executive board members.) For the express purpose of:

1. Discussing the agenda of the subsequent regular or special meeting.
2. Discussing organization business, which will have a bearing on the subsequent regular or special meeting.
3. Notifying the Board of Directors for approval of any guest speakers interested in addressing the meeting.
4. Keeping the Board of Directors informed of the progress of any committees.
5. Presenting expense vouchers to the treasurer for reimbursement after approval by the Board of Directors. A meeting of the Board of Directors may also be called for upon a verbal request by at least one-third of the Board of Directors. If such meeting is not called for by the President as stated above, such verbal request to be followed by a written request from supporting Board

members.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### *Qualifications for and Duties of Membership*

**Section 1.** Any person of Italian descent who is a member of the uniformed, Civilian, or probationary force of the Fire Department of the City of New York shall be eligible for membership. Members retired from the Fire Department may continue to hold membership in this Association.

Definition of Italian Descent: Defined as either parent having had an Italian lineage, with final acceptance of said applicant being determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2.** Application for membership shall be made to the Financial Secretary on printed form furnished by this Association, accompanied by the required dues. Applications for membership shall be voted upon at the next regular meeting and, upon receiving a majority vote of the members present, the application shall be declared elected to membership by the President. No applications for membership shall be considered while Departmental charges are pending against any applicant. Any false statement made by an applicant, whether committed knowingly or inadvertently, shall be the subject of an inquiry by the Board of Directors who shall, after investigation, vote to

retain or expel the member from this association. This action may be taken before or after applicant voted into membership.

The Financial Secretary shall retain all applications for membership indefinitely.

**Section 3.** It is held to be the first duty of membership to attend meetings of the Association, Departmental duties permitting, take part in its deliberations, and support all programs and activities undertaken by the Association.

**Section 4.** All newly accepted members shall be furnished with a dues card for the current year. Dues card shall be presented to the Sergeant at Arms by all members, for the admittance to the regular meetings of the Association.

**Section 5.** *Honorary Membership* Any person who has rendered distinguished and valuable service to the National, State or Municipal Governments, or who has rendered a like service to this Association, is eligible. Such person must receive prior to the approval of the Board of Directors, for the Honorary Membership before submitting. Members shall not be in attendance while the business portion of the meeting the Association is in progress.

Honorary membership may be discontinued by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors, if the Honorary Member is deemed to be unworthy of this distinguished honor. A list shall be kept by the recording Secretary of all people so honored, and said list is to be amended whenever necessary.

**Section 6.** *Associate Membership*

1. Any person who is not otherwise eligible to be a member of this organization shall be eligible for associate membership in the association. There shall be issued to all associate members an associate membership card. Associate members shall be entitled to receive the association's newspaper, shall be permitted to attend all weekend and vacation trips sponsored by the association.

The associate members shall not be permitted in attendance at the business portion of the meeting of this association. The dues for the associate member shall be \$10.00 per year.

2. Application for the associate membership shall be made to the Financial Secretary on printed form furnished by this association accompanied by the required dues. Applications for membership shall be voted upon at the next regular meeting and upon receiving majority vote of the members present, the applicant for Associate Membership shall be declared elected as an Associate Member to this association.

**Article 4, - SEC 7.1**

**International member.**

Any person who lives outside the 50 United States who is not otherwise eligible to be a regular member can apply for international membership. Applicants must be approved by majority of executive board members.

**ARTICLE V**

**OFFICER'S DUTIES**

**Section 1.** *President*

It shall be the duties of the President to preside at all meetings; enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the association, decide all questions of order, act as Judge and declare the results of all elections, appoint all committees unless otherwise ordered, and sign all orders on the Treasury, in conjunction with the Treasurer, for all moneys ordered paid by the Association.

He shall not be entitled to vote except when balloting for candidates, electing officers, or when the members are equally divided on questions, at which time he shall cast the deciding vote.

He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and shall perform such other duties devolving upon the office as the laws of the Association permit.

If at anytime the services of an attorney are required to represent the Association, the President, after consultation with the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and the Board of Trustees, is authorized to secure the services of a competent attorney, the cost of same, if any, to be paid for by the Association.

**Section 2.** *Vice Presidents*

The *1st Vice President* shall act as President in the absence of the president, and in any case of vacancy in the Office of President he shall become the President for the balance of the term.

In the absence of the President and the 1st Vice President, the *2nd Vice President* shall assume the duties of the President.

In the absence of all of the foregoing, the Recording Secretary shall call a meeting of the remaining Board of Directors for the express purpose of filling the aforesaid vacancies. Two-thirds (2/3) of the remaining Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for this meeting.

**Section 3.**    *Financial Secretary*

The Financial Secretary shall receive all dues moneys and turn same over to the Treasurer, receiving a receipt thereof. He shall keep a correct roll and standing of all members of the Association, and shall hold office until his/her successor shall qualify.

He will be required to present his report annually or whenever the Board of Directors shall request same.

**Section 4.**    The chairman of the Board of Borough Trustees shall be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

**Section 5.**    *Treasurer*

The Treasurer shall receive all Moneys from the Financial Secretary, giving receipt thereof, and deposit same in a bank or trust company in the name of the Columbia Association, Fire Department, City of New York. He shall, in conjunction with the President, sign all checks necessary for the proper conduct of business of the Association. He shall present his report quarterly, or when the Board of Directors deems it necessary, and performs other duties in connection with his office. He shall hold office until his successor shall qualify.

**Section 6.**    *Recording and Corresponding Secretary*

The Recording and Corresponding Secretary shall keep a complete and accurate record of all meetings and forward all communications as directed by the President. He shall keep a record of all deaths, dismissals, retirements, resignations and members dropped for delinquency. He shall be the custodian of the Seal of the Association.

**Section 7.**    *Sergeants at Arms*

The Sergeants at Arms shall be requested to carry out all the directions of the President and help to preserve and maintain order at the meeting.

**Section 8.**    *Borough Trustees*

The Borough Trustees shall collect all dues and assessments from the members of their units in their respective boroughs and issue dues cards to each paid up member. They shall forward all moneys to the Financial Secretary on or before the last day of the month in which the money was collected.

Trustees shall forward Mass Cards when notified of deaths of members' immediate family and notify the President of the death of a member of this association as soon as known.

Trustees shall inform their members of all actions taken on issues at meetings and the results of all pertinent facts.

They shall keep an accurate record of members of their respective boroughs. The chairman of the Board of Borough Trustees will determine the method and extent of record keeping after consultation.

The Chairman shall call meetings of the Trustees, as he deems necessary for the dissemination of information.

**Section 8a.**

The Board of Directors CAN appoint an EMS representative who will have the power of a vote equal to the members of the Board. This EMS representative will be reviewed at the January Executive Board meeting. The person will have the power of a vote except when that person is up for appointment or review.

**Section 9.** *Constitutional Committee*

The Constitution Committee shall consist of members of the Board of Directors as designed by the President. They shall receive all proposed amendments in writing to debate them and study their merits before presenting them to the general membership for their consideration. It will require a majority of this Committee to pass any proposed amendments for presentation to the general membership.

The Constitutional Committee shall consist of a Chairman and not less than four (4) nor more than (6) six committee members.

**Section 10.** *Delegates*

The Trustees of all Boroughs can appoint delegates for each Battalion and Company in their respective Boroughs. It shall be the duty of the delegates to assist the Trustee to collect all dues and assessments from the members of their respective units and disseminate information about the Association.

**ARTICLE VI**

**FUNDS AND BENEFITS**

**Section 1.** There shall be two (2) funds maintained by this association: the General Fund and the Scholarship-Welfare Fund.

**Section 2.** The General Fund shall consist of all moneys collected for dues and assessments. All benefits, and the expenses of conducting the business of the Association, shall be charged against this fund.

Revenue to the General Fund shall come from dues and assessments. Dues shall be \$20.00 per year, \$5.00 of which goes to the subscription of the “Columbia Firefighter” the official newspaper of this association.

Dues are payable in one (1) installment prior to March 31st of each year in order for a member to remain in good financial standing and be eligible for all benefits from this association. Executive Board members, elected or appointed, shall not be assessed dues during their tenure in office and shall still be eligible for all benefits.

Dues for the calendar year must accompany all applications for membership.

**Section .3-** A “deceased Members Scholarship Award” shall be established in the amount of \$1000 in memory of deceased Columbia Association Members who are in good standing and has passed away during the precious year and to be awarded to a deserving scholarship winner selected from entrants who applied for the association scholarship college awards (other then the winners for that year). Eligible names will be paced in a container and the President at the April General meting will draw one winner. The award shall be presented, together with the other scholarship awards, at the annual scholarship dinner. In addition an “Honor Scroll” listing members in good standing who has passed away the precious year shall be notated in a leaflet that shall be included in the evening program booklet.

**Section 4.** Any member of this association who is in arrears for (3 months for the non-payment of dues and/or assessment, stands suspended, and at his demise, while under suspension, shall not be entitled to any benefit from this association.

**New Sec. 5-** the board shall make the necessary by- laws changes and to discontinue the current death benefit gift and to start the new Deceased Members Scholarship Award affected Jan. 1, 2006. Deceased members family will receive a Mass card from the Association.

**Section 6.**

1. There shall be established a separate account, hereinafter called the “Scholarship-Welfare Fund.” All moneys remaining over and above expenses incurred in connection with the Scholarship Dinner and Dance, and from moneys received for Scholarship donations, shall be deposited into this fund. Said fund to be used for the sole purpose of Scholarship awards and/or charities as set forth in *Section 6 (5) of*

Article VI of this Constitution.

2. The Scholarship Committee shall consist of five (5) officers from the Board of Directors: the President, the first and second Vice Presidents, the treasurer, and a Scholarship Chairman, who shall receive all moneys for this fund and deposit same in a bank or trust company in the name of the Columbia Association, Fire Department City of New York.

3. All checks necessary for the proper conduct of business connected with this fund shall be signed by any Two (2) of the following officers: Chairman of the Scholarship Fund, President, or Treasurer.

4. The chairman shall report annually in January and/or when the Board of Directors deems it necessary. He shall perform all other duties connected with his office.

5. The Scholarship Chairman shall, when authorized, make contributions to any recognized charity, such as Muscular Dystrophy, Cooley's Anemia, Retarded Children, or any other as voted upon by the membership, not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per contribution.

6. Awards

College Awards: Two (2) awards of \$1,500.00 each to the highest S.A.T. score for a Boy and a Girl, and two (2) \$1,000.00 awards each to the second highest boy and girl. Each to be decided by the highest S.A.T. score received, as administered by the Admissions Testing Program: The highest S.A.T. score submitted must be one taken between September of his/her Junior Year of High School and March of his/her senior year of High School. Only applicants in their graduating year are eligible. Test taken prior or after these dates will not be considered.

High School Awards: Tests to be prepared by a private testing service. The testing service to be selected by the Board of Directors. Participants must be eighth year students and awards shall number six (6), as follows.

1st	\$750.00	Boy	\$750.00	Girl
2nd	\$600.00	Boy	\$600.00	Girl
3rd	\$500.00	Boy	\$500.00	Girl

The Scholarship awards shall be made to those candidates finishing with the highest scores, one boy and one girl, and to continue in that order until all the moneys have been awarded.

The number and amount of the awards to remain in force until changed by the Board of Directors. In the event of a tie, the award shall be shared equally by the

candidates finishing with a tie: i.e. A two-way tie for 1st place shall share 1st and 2nd place awards and receive six hundred and seventy five dollars \$675.00 each. A two-way tie for 2nd place shall share 2nd and 3rd place awards, etc. Only the names of the winners and the order of finish will be made public.

Eligibility.

The son or daughter (step or foster included) of a member in good standing or of a deceased member if said member was in good standing at the time of his death, are eligible and must file an application and statement in order to participate.

**NINTH GRADE** students are ineligible.

Definition of member in good standing:

A member who has been paid up as a member from the time of his entrance into the Fire Department. If a member does not join this Association at the time of his entrance into the Fire Department, he must pay all back dues until entrance into the Fire Department or five (5) consecutive years, which ever is less. Members reinstated shall be considered ineligible for all benefits unless all back dues and assessments are paid up. Dues to be paid at rate in force at the time of reinstatement. Members presently eligible for scholarship and other benefits shall be considered in good standing upon adoption of this revised constitution.

**ARTICLE VII**

**Section 1.** To amend these by-laws, the proposed amendment shall be introduced at a regular meeting of this association after having been submitted to the Constitution Committee as provided for in *Article V Section 9*. It shall be read at the next two (2) consecutive regular meetings and after ratification by at least two-thirds vote of the members present at the second meeting, the proposed amendment shall become part of these By-laws.

**Section 2.** Robert's Manual shall be the guide in debate when not in conflict with any established Law or Rule of this Association.

*Constitution and By-Laws  
Adopted October 14, 1975*

<i>Amended</i>	<i>April 14, 1981</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>November 1, 1998</i>
<i>Amended</i>	<i>January 1, 2006</i>
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