



## 2017 Candidates for IAAI Board of Directors

### James M Kanavy, IAAI-CFI, MIAAI, Kentucky

**How long have you been a member of the IAAI?**

11 years with the International 20 years with the Chapter

**How many IAAI Annual Meetings have you attended? 3 Which years?**

2013, 2014, 2015

**Do you regularly attend your State/Provincial Chapter meetings and activities? Yes**

**List any offices held in your State Chapter.** President, Board of Directors, Sergeant-at-Arms, CFI Committee Chair, Training and Education Chair

**Please list any International offices held, special projects or Committee work, indicating years of service** I never held any International offices. However, I have taught and lectured for the Ohio Chapter, Tennessee Chapter and Kentucky Chapter

**If you are elected, will you take an active role in the IAAI, and with your present position, attend all annual meetings and board meetings during your term of office? Yes**

**Describe, in 100 words or less, why you feel you are qualified for this position.** Over 33 years of public service and proven leadership abilities in the fire service and the IAAI, is just one of the many reasons why I am qualified. I have had the ability to increase membership, within the chapter and the International, not only in Kentucky, but Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee, creating training opportunities including the FIT program, Court Room Testimony program, and the KY Chapter has the lead role in fire investigation training for the Kentucky Fire Commission.

**Why do you want to become a Director or Officer of the IAAI?**

I believe the International is a parent organization for the local chapters and, like local chapters, we have to initiate change from the old to the new, to get new ideas to allow us to move into the future and to allow the newer or younger individuals a chance to bring their ideas and leadership roles forward to entice more people to become members. I know that, if elected, affordable training will be one of my highest priorities. I believe in education for this field and understand that if I am elected to the Board, some of the decisions I make or am involved with can change the field of fire investigation for the next 20 to 30 years. That is not something that I take lightly. I want to continue to have the knowledge and technology for the International to move forward to continue to be the leader in fire investigation science field, through training, legislature, and by our members.

**What do you believe are your best leadership traits and how would you use them as a Director or Officer of the IAAI?** I have proven leadership abilities. Some of my experience began within the chapter, where I started as sergeant at arms, and progressed to board member, and then to president. I also have leadership experience within the fire service where I have worked my way up the command structure of the fire service twice in my life. The first was when I started in the volunteer fire service, where I worked all the way up to fire chief. The second was during my paid full time service, again working from a recruit all the way up to Asst. Fire Chief. I have learned throughout my career and life, as I traveled all over KY and other states, that leadership is an earned status and not awarded or elected. To be an effective leader, we must lead by example, and not initiate things that we ourselves won't follow or do. We, as board members, are only as good as the folks we serve. Without our chapters and members, we are nothing. With that being said, we must listen to, and try to implement the suggestions and ideas of the chapters and members staying within the fundamentals of our mission. Since being with the International, and holding a chapter office, I have started and continue to



hold our annual training conference, which brings top-notch education and training to the chapter at a very reasonable price. I have promoted the CFI program and assisted with certifying numerous CFIs. I was involved in teaching and organizing the first FIT program in the State and was instrumental in getting our Court Room Testimony class started with the assistance

of EKU. As chair of the training and education committee, the Kentucky Chapter has assumed the lead role in training of fire investigation classes across the state for the Kentucky State Fire Commission and provides classes throughout the fire service and law enforcement community.

**What steps do you believe should be taken to grow membership?** The steps I would like to take to grow membership are to be seen at the local chapter level. Most chapters have numerous members that are not in the International Association. If we can get out and tell these chapter members what exactly their membership to the International does for them, other than a card and a monthly publication, I believe we could increase our numbers. We must let them know that we pay for CFITrainer, we help with the firefighter assistance grants, we provide lobbying power to the government for issues that affect the fire service and the fire investigation field, and we must let them know that we are the leaders in fire investigation training throughout the world. In addition, we also offer cost-effective training throughout the world.

**How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the International and Chapters?** As I have said before, we have to go to these local chapters with a "boots on the ground" approach, while including the chapters and their boards and members in committees and functions for the International. Listen to their needs and requests, and meet those needs and requests. When we have an open line of communication, being able to answer questions without the red tape and run around would also be of great assistance in improving relationships, and chapters would realize what the International actually does for the Chapters.

**What are your recommendations for future funding of CFITrainer.Net@?**

The grant process from the federal government should be continued. Another possibility would be to try and entice the local chapters for support due to the ever growing use of the site throughout the fire service, include local fire and police agencies that are using the sites. The local level could try and get state funding to assist with the funding and even open it up to getting some paid advertisement from corporate or private sponsors. Try to have the insurance industry involved for some funding.

**Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI?** First off, training to me is the quintessential thing that we, in this profession, should be concerned with. That being said, other elements for the IAAI should be for us to assist in passing legislation to help safeguard the public from fires and potential product failures with stiffer laws and regulations. We as an organization must look at being sustainable with the understanding that what we do today could impact the science of fire investigation for the next forty years. As an organization, we have to work with federal, state, local, and private industry to further the field of fire investigation. With this as our goal we can reduce the loss of life, property damage, and insurance claims throughout the world proving we are the leader in the fire investigation world. We must also help the private, public, corporate, and fire administrations to educate the public on fire education and faults found so that fire-related deaths go down. We have a responsibility to be the leader in the scientific field of fire investigation, with the courts and regulatory agencies knowing the IAAI experts are world renowned.