

*"John E. Fitzgerald Medal"*

LADDERMAN WILLIAM W. AUSTIN of Ladder Co. 26

At approximately 11:30 A.M., Saturday, September 4, 1948, Ladderman William W. Austin of Ladder Co. 26, while off duty, and walking along the Charles River bank in Brighton, at a point opposite Brook Street, was startled to hear a young girl cry out, "Mister, Mister, hurry, hurry, or she will drown." Ladderman Austin ran to a boat-landing nearby on which several small children were excitedly screaming. He was shocked to see a small girl struggling in the water about ten feet from the boatlanding. Ladderman Austin immediately jumped into the river, lunged forward, grasped the little girl, and struggled back to the pier. The water at this point is about ten to twelve feet deep and Ladderman Austin cannot swim.

This was a most heroic act, reflecting great credit upon the Boston Fire Department. Ladderman Austin, although unable to swim, jumped into the river, with complete disregard for his own life, and saved this little girl from drowning. He was commended by the Fire Commissioner in General Orders No. 53, series of 1948.

The Board of Merit, consisting of the Chief of Department, and the Deputy Chiefs, is pleased to recommend that Ladderman William W. Austin be awarded the "John E. Fitzgerald Medal."