

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

August 13, 2012

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A TRIBUTE TO ONE OF SETAUKET'S BRAVEST

Legislator Hahn Introduces Bill to Honor Fallen Firefighter Joseph DiBernardo, Jr.

PORT JEFFERSON, NY – Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn has introduced legislation to rename a portion of County Road 97, commonly known as Nicolls Road, in honor of fallen firefighter Joseph DiBernardo Jr. Under [Introductory Resolution 1800-2012](#), a portion of Nicolls Road, extending from Route 347 north to Fox Hunt Lane in Setauket, will be rededicated to memorialize the Stony Brook native and Setauket Fire Department volunteer who died last November.

In 2005, DiBernardo, a New York City Firefighter, was one of six rescuers who were searching for people they thought might be trapped in an illegally subdivided building in the Bronx, when they themselves suddenly became trapped. The firefighters desperately jumped or fell trying to escape the flames that surrounded them. Two firefighters did not survive the fall of 50 feet. Others, including DiBernardo, suffered significant injuries during a day that would come to be known as "Black Sunday."

According to reports, DiBernardo helped another firefighter safely escape the "Black Sunday" fire before the rope that he himself was climbing down gave out. He landed on his feet, but shattered every bone below his waist, spent 18 days in a coma and required 20 hours of

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surgery on his legs. The injuries that he sustained continued to cause him severe pain throughout the remainder of his shortened life.

In addition to his FDNY service, DiBernardo was a former captain of Setauket Fire Department's Hook and Ladder Co. 1 and served the Department in many capacities including as a Probationary Firefighter Instructor, Heavy Rescue Training Officer, Department Safety Officer, Apparatus and Equipment Coordinator, and Technical Rescue Team Leader. DiBernardo was also responsible for the design and construction of Setauket's Rescue 6 heavy rescue apparatus that was later renamed in his honor. In addition, DiBernardo was a co-founding member of the Brookhaven Technical Task Force and an instructor at the Suffolk County Fire Academy.

“Renaming the road that passes the development where he lived as a child, and the Setauket Fire House where he spent many happy hours volunteering to assist his neighbors in times of need is a fitting tribute to Lt. DiBernardo's memory,” said Legislator Hahn. “Not only will this rededication of Nicolls Road help remind everyone of this one man's selflessness, but it will also serve to honor all volunteers who put themselves at risk to help safeguard our communities.”

The resolution is scheduled to be reviewed by the County's Siting of Memorials & Symbols Committee on August 30. If the panel agrees that DiBernardo's service is consistent with County guidelines for naming, the bill will be eligible for consideration by the Legislature's Public Works and Transportation at its September 4 meeting. Final approval could come at the Legislature's September 13 General Meeting in Hauppauge

“It would mean so much to us to have a portion of Nicolls Road renamed the Lt. Joseph P. DiBernardo Memorial Road in honor of our son, Joey,” added his parents Barbara and Joseph DiBernardo. “Joey did so much as a volunteer for the Setauket Fire Department on Nicolls Road over the years, the Town of Brookhaven and the County of Suffolk. When Joey was

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not working as a firefighter for the FDNY, he was at the Setauket Fire Department or giving safety trainings around Long Island. He was an expert in the technical rescue field. We would like the residents of Suffolk County who pass or go up Nicolls Road to be reminded of Joey's dedication to the fire service, his bravery and his heroism.”

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