



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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Legislature Adopts Bill to Honor One of Setauket's Bravest *Leg. Hahn's bill honoring Lt. Joseph DiBernardo gets unanimous support*



Lt. Joseph DiBernardo Jr. was assigned to the Rescue and Recovery operation for over six months at the World Trade Center following the September 2001 Terrorist Attacks.

PORT JEFFERSON, NY – The Suffolk County Legislature last evening unanimously adopted a resolution sponsored by Legislator Kara Hahn that will rename a portion of County Road 97 in honor of fallen firefighter Joseph DiBernardo Jr. Under the bill a portion of Nicolls

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Road/CR 97, 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. [Resolution 838-2012](#) now goes to County Executive Bellone for his final approval.

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 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 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.

The Legislature's vote came just two days after the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, where DiBernardo spent six months assigned to rescue and recovery efforts at Ground Zero.

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“Joe offered so much of himself to help his neighbor,” said Legislator Hahn. “When he was not working to protect lives in New York City, he was here in Setauket safeguarding our community or in Yaphank training the next generation of Suffolk County firefighters. Lt. DiBernardo’s dedication and devotion for his fellow man seem to embody those qualities that just days ago we as a nation paused to reflect on.”

Once the adopted resolution is signed by the County Executive, a small ceremony officially renaming the roadway will be held.

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