



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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**COUNTY ROAD 97 DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
FALLEN FIREFIGHTER JOSEPH DiBERNARDO, JR.**



SETAUKET, NY – Approximately 60 people came out to dedicate the portion of Nicolls Road stretching from Route 347 to Fox Hunt Lane in Setauket in memory of fallen New York City and Setauket firefighter Joseph DiBernardo Jr. The roadside ceremony was followed by a remembrance service held at the Setauket Fire House's Station #3 on County Road 97 where DiBernardo served as a

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volunteer. The dedication comes one year to the week after DiBernardo's passing from an accidental medication overdose that was the result of critical injuries he sustained while fighting a blaze in the Bronx.

In 2005, DiBernardo was one of six FDNY rescuers who were searching for people they thought might be trapped in an illegally subdivided building when they themselves suddenly became trapped. The firefighters desperately jumped or fell trying to escape the flames that surrounded them. DiBernardo reportedly helped another firefighter safely escape the fire before the rope that he was climbing down gave out. He landed on his feet, but shattered every bone below his waist, spending 18 days in a coma and requiring 20 hours of surgery on his legs. Two of the six firefighters did not survive the fall on what would come to be known as "Black Sunday."

"This dedication marks the gratitude that we have for Joe DiBernardo's service and selfless volunteerism to his fellow man," said Legislator Kara Hahn. "Dedicating this part of County Road 97 is a tribute not only to the sacrifice that Joe made to keep us safe, but will serve as a continual reminder of the dedication and bravery of firefighters across America."

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.

This past September, Legislator Kara Hahn won approval for a resolution to honor DiBernardo by renaming the road which passes the development where he lived as a child, and the Setauket Fire House where he served.

"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," said his parents Barbara and Joseph DiBernardo. "When Joey was not working as a firefighter for the FDNY, he was at the Setauket Fire Department

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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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