



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

## Senator Johnson Honors Gold Star Mother Dorine Kenney

OWEN H. JOHNSON June 10, 2008



State Senator Owen H. Johnson (4th Senate District, Babylon), recently honored Gold Star Mother Dorine Kenney of Bay Shore as a 2008 New York State Senate “Woman of Distinction.” Dorine Kenney founded the Jacob’s Light Foundation in memory of her beloved son, Spc. Jacob Fletcher. Jacob served the 173rd Airborne Brigade and was one of the thousand paratroopers to parachute into Iraq on March 26, 2003. He was killed in Iraq on November 14, 2003 while valiantly serving our nation.

While Jacob was in Iraq, Ms. Kenney sent him weekly boxes of sundries. When Jacob asked his mother to send a box to one of his buddies who had not received anything from home,

she happily obliged. When he asked her to send specific items for other soldiers, it became an ongoing project for her.

Eleven days after Jacob's death was his 29th birthday. Ms. Kenney sent a box of supplies and, thus, the Jacob's Light Foundation was born. To date, the Foundation's 250 + volunteers have sent more than 160,000 pounds of items and letters to our troops.

Senator Johnson explained that the Senate's Women of Distinction program was created as part of the Senate's celebration of Women's History Month. The program, which started in 1998, honors exceptional achievement, personal excellence and outstanding, courageous and heroic actions on the part of individual women from all across the State. Each honoree's photograph and biography becomes part of a special exhibit that honors and celebrates the unique accomplishments of exemplary women in New York.

“Dorine Kenney is an incredible woman whose work has made a difference in so many lives,” said Senator Johnson. “Dorine turned what was a personal tragedy into her life's work and through the Jacob's Light Foundation she has comforted our young men and women who are still serving in harm's way. She's an inspiration to me and to everyone who meets her. I am truly honored to have nominated her as a New York State Senate Woman of Distinction.”

As part of Dorine Kenney's mission to comfort and support our soldiers, she has also brought our military's need for more lifesaving blood coagulants to the attention of the US Congress. She has personally sent hundreds of clot-promoting bandage kits to military units in need.

Dorine Kenney is also a minister of teaching and healing and has taught holistic healing both internationally and domestically. She was one of 10 featured Community Crusaders in

CNN's Heroes Gallery in 2007. In 2008, she was both a Long Island Press Woman of Achievement and the Elk Citizens of the Year. She has also received numerous citations from all branches of the military.

Dorine was one of 38 honorees from all across the State to be recognized at the Senate's 2008 Women of Distinction Ceremony in Albany. She traveled to Albany for the event with her devoted assistant, Alyse Spinner, to accept the award.

Also honored from the 4th Senate District this year were Patricia Burkhart of Deer Park, founding board member of the Friends of the Edgewood Preserve and Judy Driscoll Skillen of Babylon for her efforts to beautify and improve the quality of life in Babylon Village.

Senator Johnson is pictured presenting Dorine with her award.