



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senator Flanagan Awards Liberty Medals To Hauppauge Heroes

JOHN J. FLANAGAN October 13, 2009



Senator John J. Flanagan (2nd Senate District) presented New York State Senate Liberty Medals to three community members who rescued a Hauppauge man from a fire last week. The three men, Hauppauge Fire Department 1st Assistant Chief Raymond Germaine, Firefighter Thomas Kriklava, Jr. and good Samaritan Steve Webber, joined together to save the man who was trapped on the second floor during a house fire in Hauppauge.

Senator Flanagan presented the Liberty Medals during a special ceremony that was arranged by the Hauppauge Fire Department as part of their annual open house on October 11th.

According to media reports, Mr. Webber was the first to arrive on the scene as he was coming home after an evening out. Upon seeing flames coming out of the house, he stopped to assist and was informed by the victim's son that his elderly father was trapped in the house. Mr. Webber worked with the son to place a ladder on the house and climbed up to the second floor where he saw an elderly man gasping for air.

That was when volunteer firefighter Kriklava, who was already heading to the firehouse to respond to the alarm, came upon the house and quickly decided to jump into action. Without stopping to put on rescue gear, he climbed up the ladder and into the second floor room to attempt a rescue.

Kriklava was quickly joined in the room by 1st Assistant Chief Germaine, who lives nearby and also did not have his fire equipment on. Together, they moved the elderly man to the window where Mr. Webber and arriving firefighters were able to take him down the ladder for transport to the hospital.

The rescued occupant, his son and Mr. Webber were all taken to the hospital for treatment. According to a published report in Newsday, the rescued occupant was being treated for various burns but is expected to make a full recovery.

His son and Mr. Webber were examined and released.

The Hauppauge Fire Department responded with six apparatus and thirty five firefighters under the command of Chief of the Department Thomas J. Kriklava, who is the father of one of the rescuers. The department was aided at the fire by units from the Nesconset, Smithtown, St. James and East Brentwood Fire Departments.

The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was created in 2000 and is one of the highest civilian honors that a New York resident can receive. It is awarded by the New York State Senate to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

“The entire community and the entire Hauppauge Fire Department have a lot to be proud of because of the effort of these three selfless individuals. Thanks to their quick and heroic actions in the face of great danger, there was no loss of life and I am proud to represent the community in saying thank you,” stated Senator Flanagan. “I also want to thank the entire Hauppauge Fire Department for inviting me to take part in this wonderful event and for all they do for our community every day of the year.”