



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Senator LaValle Honors Local Heroes

KENNETH P. LAVALLE September 14, 2010



(L-R) Chief Tom Colitti, Officer Kevin Rambo, Eftimia Tsapouris, Biruta Krilova, Senator LaValle, Alex Rabinovich

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle today honored Good Samaritans Alexander Rabinovich, Eftimia Tsapouris, and Biruta Krilova, all from Wading River, with the New York State Senate Liberty Award. The award was created in 2000 and is bestowed upon individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts or achievements on behalf of others. The three Wading River residents received the award for the critical role they played in saving the life of an 83-year-old woman who nearly drowned while swimming at Hulse Landing Beach.

On July 19, 2010, Dina Kaplunovich had been standing in the water at Hulse Landing Beach where the boats come in when one short step found her falling into a deep hole. The water began pushing her out and pulling her down. She was screaming and waving her arms for help when Eftimia Tsapouris and her babysitter, Biruta Krilova, noticed the woman in distress. They ran to a nearby swimmer, 75-year-old Alexander Rabinovich, asking for help. Then, 9-year-old Eftimia ran to call 911. Mr. Rabinovich immediately swam out to the woman, but received no response when he called out to her. He grabbed her leg and headed for the shore. Within five minutes Riverhead Police Officer, Michael Lombardo, was on the scene. He placed Ms. Kaplunovich on her side to push the water from her lungs and get her to start breathing. The Wading River Fire Department rescue crew, Chief Tom Colitti and EMT Kevin Rambo, arrived within minutes and transported her to Peconic Bay Medical Center.

"Thankfully, the trio of heroes was in the right spot at that moment, otherwise Ms. Kaplunovich's recovery would not have been possible," said Senator LaValle. "The actions of this heroic team provide evidence that humanitarians truly do live among us in our local communities. Mr. Rabinovich, Eftimia Tsapouris, and Biruta Krilova responded quickly and expertly in the face of a life-threatening circumstance. Police Officer Lombardo, Chief Colitti, and EMT Rambo also played an important and valued community service in this situation. Their reaction to this emergency situation saved a life and is indeed worthy of special recognition.

"From time to time, we hear stories of courageous and selfless deeds that are truly deserving of commendation," continued Senator LaValle. "The willingness to help a fellow human being and the genuine concern demonstrated by Good Samaritans Alexander Rabinovich, Eftimia Tsapouris, and Biruta Krilova on that fateful day exemplify the human spirit at its finest. It is my privilege to bestow upon Mr. Rabinovich, Miss Tsapouris, and Ms. Krilova the New York State Senate Liberty Award in the presence of family, friends, peers, and the local community in recognition of their lifesaving actions."