



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins and Senator Fuschillo Settle Friendly Wager

JACK M. MARTINS April 26, 2011

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A friendly wager between two State Senators was settled at Elmont Memorial High School with fanfare and good food last Friday. Senator Jack Martins' and Senator Chuck Fuschillo's bet over the Nassau County Championship Basketball title was settled in full at the Elmont Memorial High School cafeteria in front of a standing room only crowd.

The bet between the two Senators was over bragging rights over who would bring home the Nassau County Basketball Championship title. Senator Martins stood with Elmont Memorial's Spartans and Senator Fuschillo rooted on his Baldwin Bruins. The results are now history with the Spartans winning the game and bringing home the crown by beating the Bruins at the David S. Mack Arena at Hofstra University.

"The stakes were high on that game. Sitting in the arena, and watching the Spartans, was truly exciting. I had great confidence in Elmont and I knew they would give 100 percent in this game. This is a phenomenal team of outstanding young men and I couldn't be more proud of them," said Senator Martins.

The terms of the Senatorial bet were that whichever team won, the losing Senator would come to the winning Senator's school and eat lunch with the team in the school cafeteria. This past Friday, at high noon, Fuschillo met Senator Martins in front of Elmont Memorial, walked in together, and the festivities began. Elmont students, including Elmont football and lacrosse star Kevin Johnson greeted the two Senators in front of the school.

"When Senator Martins and Senator Fuschillo came into the school, the students lit up. They were real excited. Everybody in Elmont knows about this bet and people have been talking about this day for a while", said Sandra Smith noting, "the students have been writing pieces on Facebook and Twitter for quite some time. This was big for them. The spotlight was on Elmont Memorial and they earned it."

The luncheon was held in the senior cafeteria, which was packed with students from all grades. Joining Senator Martins, the Spartan squad and Senator Fuschillo in the luncheon were Sewanhaka Superintendent Warren Meierdiercks and High School Trustees Dave Fowler and Jean Fichtl.

The Spartan squad greeted the Senators with Coach George Holub. Television crews from MSG, News 12 as well as students with iPhone cameras caught the action as it happened. Martins introduced the victorious Spartan team to Senator Fuschillo.

Players gathered around the Senators, shook hands and talked about the season and the championship. The Spartan squad members in attendance were Anthony Elechi, Tyler Dechalus, Hakeem Fisher-Ali, Kyle Johnson, Rocky Chambers, Dillon Williams, Greg Senat, Tristan Brown, Reggie Pierre, Timothy Lewis, Jean Altidor, Michael Dugue, Devin Guerre, Daniel Alexander and Rahquan Scott.

The excitement over the luncheon event was evident in the players and students in the cafeteria.

“This was real exciting and great for us as a team. I thought the idea of the bet was pretty cool. I know Senator Martins and knew he was behind us. The bet really got the community involved and our school. It should become a tradition,” said senior Spartan guard Dillon Williams.

Right after the introductions concluded, Senator Martins announced, “alright guys it’s lunch time and it’s all about you. The menu was your choice. Let’s eat.”

The food for the luncheon was specially chosen for the team and had a Caribbean flair. Senator Martins asked the players what they wanted and the results were clear and unanimous- oxtails, stewed chicken, rice and peas along with beef and chicken patties. All of the selections had a Jamaican, Haitian and Caribbean flavor. With the menu set, Elmont Road’s “Buff Patty” restaurant prepared the selections.

The team and Senators lined up for the food and it was at that point Senator Fuschillo quipped to Senator Martins, “I guess this is when I eat crow.” Team players replied, “No

Senator, it's when you eat oxtails.”

The team filed through the food line heaping plates of oxtails, stewed chicken, rice and peas as well as beef and chicken patties on their plates. Senator Martins remarked, “This is excellent stuff. I’ve always loved Caribbean food and I now know why these guys like Buff Patty and Jerk Hut take-out so much.”

As the players and the Senators served themselves, Principal John Capozzi looked over the food and said “Guys save some for me.” Spartan Guard Tristan Brown replied, “We need this on the school menu Mr. Capozzi!”

The players sat with the Senators and talked basketball, college and spring break plans. Reggie Pierre said, “this was one of the greatest days I’ve had at Elmont. I ate with my team and the Senators. We celebrated our victory. This is something I’ll remember for a very long time.”

During the luncheon, Senator Fuschillo confessed that the Elmont squad beat his son’s team, Calhoun. “You guys killed us in those games,” said Fuschillo. Senator Martins talked with Rocky Chambers, Timothy Lewis, Tristan Brown, Hakeem Ali and other players about the championship game and how they felt during the contest.

“You know you guys made your family and Elmont proud. Everybody was standing in that 4th quarter, we never sat down,” Martins said at the table.

Greg Senat, the Spartans’ Center, said, “this was a great way for some of us seniors to end the season and our high school basketball careers like this today. This was a lot of fun.”

At the conclusion of the luncheon, Martins and Fuschillo presented the team with New York State Senate Resolutions passed unanimously on the floor of the New York State Senate.

Senator Martins, Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and Senator Fuschillo sponsored the resolution and spoke on the citation before it was voted upon in the chamber. During the presentation, Senator Skelos' community liaison Sandra Smith read out the names of the players who then accepted the resolution from Martins, Fuchillo, Coach Holub and Principal John Capozzi.

"You made Elmont proud, your families proud and your school proud. You worked hard. You worked as a team and showed everyone how heart, desire and hard work pay off," said Senator Martins during the presentations. One by one the players came up and accepted the honor from the Senators.

Anthony Elechi, a forward on the Spartans said, "I think this is so great for our school and community. It's an amazing feeling when you can accomplish something that has never been done. I'm very thankful we were able to do it as a team and make history. The lunch today is a lot more than a celebration. It's recognition that we did it and put Elmont on the map."