



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker Honors Honduran-born Purple Heart Recipient

KEVIN S. PARKER May 22, 2014

| ISSUE: **MILITARY AFFAIRS, HOMELAND SECURITY, MILITARY, VETERANS, CONSTITUENTS CORNER**



(**Brooklyn, NY**) – On May 20, the eve of Memorial Day, Senator Kevin Parker and his State Senate colleagues honored veterans from their respective districts during the Senate's annual Veterans Hall of Fame Awards ceremony. Senator Parker's honoree was Paul Morales, a native of Honduras that immigrated to the United States in 1965. Specialist E-4 Morales was selected by the Senator for his distinguished service in the United States Army, which awarded Mr. Morales with the Purple Heart Medal.

“Our heroic veterans deserve every accolade and moment of recognition and praise that we can give to them, and it is my special privilege and honor to stand beside Mr. Paul Morales and his proud family to pay tribute to his years of active service and valor on behalf of the U.S. Army,” said Sen. Parker. “The fact that Mr. Morales still dedicates his time to serving veterans in need, is a testament to the strength of his character and his dedication to improving our community. As New Yorkers, and Americans, we are proud to call him ours, as I am certain Honduras is equally proud to call him a native son,” Parker continued.

Mr. Morales joined the United States Army and was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia, for basic training. After his Advanced Infantry Training (AIT), he served at Fort Carson, Colorado, in preparation for overseas duty in South Korea. On January 23, 1968, North Korean soldiers attacked the Second ID Sector, where Mr. Morales was stationed. Mr. Morales was wounded in that attack and sent to the Seventh Evacuation Hospital where he remained for three months.

On February 23, 1968, Mr. Morales was awarded the Purple Heart Medal and the Imjin Scout Certificate “for commendable participation in operational missions along the Demilitarized Zone.” He was active in more than 20 missions along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) before being discharged from the Army on May 23, 1968. Upon his return home and rehabilitation over a period of two years, his determination to overcome his injuries drove him to work and attend night school. He graduated with a high school diploma, and on October 29, 1970, proudly became a United States citizen. On June 26, 1972, Mr. Morales was honorably discharged as an E-4, Specialist Four, and upon his return to civilian life, he has continued to give selflessly to his community for decades.

“This experience in one word has been awesome,” Morales said emphatically. “I am honored to be recognized by my Senator, Kevin Parker, but I cannot forget the others who deserve this equally if not more. On a daily basis I see veterans who need shelter, medicine, food and

I am committed to help vets receive their deserved benefits. I am so glad my better half, Rita, of 40 years, our eldest daughter Xiomara, youngest son Marcos, and my brother, Balerio, could share in this amazing once-in-a-lifetime event. Sen. Parker is a true Purple Heart Supporter and I am proud he's on our side." (Morales noted his eldest son, Paul Morales, Jr., an active U.S. Army guard was in California and unable to attend the event.)

The New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame was created to honor and recognize outstanding veterans from the Empire State who have distinguished themselves both in military and civilian life. Their meritorious service to our nation deserves the special recognition that only a Hall of Fame can provide, as a fitting expression of our gratitude and admiration.

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#### ***About Senator Kevin Parker***

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committees on Energy and Telecommunications Committee and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.