



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

## Matthew Mondoux

MARK GRISANTI May 18, 2012



Matthew Mondoux

**Award:** Honoring Our Veterans

**Year:** 2012

Matthew Mondoux, a 31-year old Niagara Falls resident, is an extraordinary man who sees himself as just an ordinary person. After the September 11th terrorist attacks, Matthew felt he wanted to give back to his country, and traded college to join the Army. Matthew was assigned to the New York State Army National Guard 27th Brigade and the 2/108th infantry out of Genesso. Eventually, he was sent overseas and fought in both Iraq and Afghanistan. For his exemplary service to our country, he received numerous services awards; including the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Armed Forces Reserved Medal and a Combat Action Badge for his time in Iraq. After his tour of duty was completed, he volunteered for a second call to duty in Afghanistan as an E-4 Specialist.

After being honorably discharged as a disabled veteran in May 2011, Matthew started his own campaign to honor a friend who was fighting the disease Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He decided to walk nearly 400 miles to Yankee Stadium wearing a vintage Lou Gehrig uniform. Leaving behind his wife and young daughter, he walked about 30 miles a day for 14 days. When he arrived at Yankee Stadium he was met by Mayor Michael Bloomberg who presented him with a proclamation at home plate. Money that he raised on his campaign went to Lou Gehrig's alma mater, Columbia University, where the Eleanor and Lou Gehrig MDA/ALS Center conducts research for a cure.

According to Matthew this is just the start of his charity work. "This walk represents how big my heart is and how far I would go to help make a difference." An inspiration to us all, he is planning his next charitable act.