



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

## Irving Cantor

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO May 19, 2013



Corporal

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**Award:** Honoring Our Veterans

**Year:** 2013

Corporal Irving Cantor was born in Syracuse on December 21, 1918 to Bertha and Louis Cantor, who came to the United States from Russia. He served in the 3138th Motor Messenger Signal Corps, carrying messages behind enemy lines in the European Theater of Operations, working directly with and for General Eisenhower.

Upon his return to Syracuse after serving his country, Corporal Cantor received a citation from President Truman commenting that he would serve his community and country as he had done overseas. He fulfilled that call for service with a lifetime of commitment to veterans.

Corporal Cantor spent much of his career as a theater manager in places like Auburn, Baltimore, Rochester, Arizona, Ohio and New York City. In addition to his work as a theater manager, he devoted much of his life to assisting veterans.

After the Vietnam conflict, Corporal Cantor developed the program "Bet on a Vet" to assist unemployed veterans in finding work. In one year, nearly 3,000 jobs were provided for local area veterans. For his leadership on this program, Corporal Cantor received a Congressional Commendation.

Next, he learned that there were plans to tear down the War Memorial to build a convention center. Corporal Cantor fought the demolition, and after nine years, he laid the groundwork to make the War Memorial in Onondaga County a state and national landmark.

Corporal Cantor then began the Veterans News – a free newsletter sponsored by local

businesses to provide vital information on veterans' benefits.

His most significant and lasting achievement was founding the Veteran's Party, an independent political party, which is comprised of veterans from all eras of military service. The party endorses candidates from all levels of government who support policies that help veterans.

Corporal Cantor died on December 25, 1997, and is survived by his daughter, Linda Chew, a granddaughter, Heather Quattrone and two great grandchildren, Elijah and Katelyn Mayhan.

Corporal Cantor served his country with honor, and he served his fellow veterans and their families with total dedication. His immeasurable contributions to our state and nation have improved the lives of countless veterans.