



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Presents Liberty Award to Heroic Oswego City Firefighter

BRIAN DWYER May 10, 2018

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At the Oswego City Fire Department Thursday, State Senator Patty Ritchie presented Oswego City Firefighter Sean O'Gorman with the Senate Liberty Award Thursday for his efforts to rescue two teenage girls from a rip current in the Atlantic Ocean.

The New York State Senate Liberty Award is one of the highest civilian honors that a New Yorker can receive. Similar to the national Congressional Gold Medal, the award is presented to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

“As a mother and grandmother, I think I can speak for families across the country in saying that Sean O’Gorman’s brave actions were heroic. He saved two lives that day and made sure a family remained whole,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I am very proud to present the New York State Senate Liberty Medal to this hero, and I thank him for his dedication to emergency response, as well as his service to our community and entire country.”

Last Month, O’Gorman was visiting Emerald Isle, North Carolina with his family. While spending time on the beach, he heard calls for help and noticed the young girls in the ocean, struggling to get back to shore.

O’Gorman immediately went into first responder mode. As the girls’ mother called 9-1-1, he asked their father to hold back, and started swimming out to them. After a tough swim, he reached them, instructed them to hold on to his feet, and swam them back to safety. Local emergency responders arrived a short time after everyone was safely on shore, demonstrating how critical O’Gorman’s quick action truly was.

“When I rescued these young women, I did what any emergency responder would do,” said Sean O’Gorman. “I am pleased to receive this honor and even more pleased that a tragedy was averted, and that these lives were able to be saved.”

Two weeks earlier, Sean O’Gorman took part in a specialized training session for rough and unpredictable water rescues.

North Carolina is known as one of the most dangerous states for rip currents. Just days before this rescue, a four-year-old boy who was vacationing with his family in North Carolina, tragically lost his life after being pulled into the ocean by a swift wave.

(Senator Ritchie (right center) is seen at the Oswego City Fire Chief Randy Griffin (left), Sean O’Gorman (left center) and Oswego City Councilor Robert Corradino (right).)