



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Presents Liberty Award to Heroic Watertown City Police Officer

BRIAN DWYER June 25, 2018

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At the Flower Memorial Library in Watertown Monday, State Senator Patty Ritchie presented Watertown City Police Officer William Rafferty with the Senate Liberty Award for his efforts to save the life of a six-week-old baby boy who had stopped breathing.

Last Month, new mother Mary Kate Wilde was putting her newborn son, Luke—who was born premature by emergency C-section—in his car seat to go to a doctor’s appointment. He

suddenly let out a strange cry, lost color and his eyes rolled back. Mary Kate called 911. Officer Rafferty responded, to find that the baby was not breathing. He began to perform CPR. The ambulance arrived shortly after, and Officer Rafferty jumped in the back of the ambulance with the baby, continuing to perform CPR until the color in Luke's face came back.

"Every parent knows that there is nothing more important than the safety of your children," said Senator Ritchie. "All moms worry, no matter how old their children are. When I heard about this, I knew how terrifying it must have been for Mary Kate Wilde. Thankfully, Officer Rafferty was there, and was able to keep calm throughout the entire situation. Thanks to his training and heroic efforts, Luke is still with us today."

"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," Senator Ritchie added.

"When I responded to Mary Kate Wilde's call for help, I did what any other police officer or emergency responder would have done," said Officer Rafferty, a 23-year veteran of the City of Watertown Police Department. "I am tremendously grateful that I was able to arrive, take action quickly and save Luke's life. It is something I will never forget and I am humbled to receive this honor."

Luke's parents would later find out that their son's lungs were underdeveloped and Luke had to spend a couple of weeks at Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse.

Officer Rafferty, wanting Luke to have something to remember that day, gave Luke's mother the patch off the uniform he was wearing. Officer Rafferty wrote the date he performed CPR on Luke on the back of the patch and added an inscription that says "The day that change your life and mine."

“Because of Officer Rafferty, Luke is still here today,” said Mary Kate Wilde. “I cannot put into words how thankful I am for his service and am so happy he is being recognized for what he did for our Luke, and our family.”

The New York State Senate Liberty Award is one of the highest honors 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.

(ATTN. PHOTO EDITORS: Senator Ritchie (left) is pictured at the Flower Memorial Library with Kyle Wilde (left center), Mary Kate Wilde with Luke Wilde (right center) and Watertown Police Officer William Rafferty (right))