



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris Honors Two Astoria Icons During Street Co-Naming Ceremonies

MICHAEL GIANARIS July 19, 2021

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ASTORIA – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris honored two icons of the Astoria community during street co-naming ceremonies this weekend. Senator Gianaris recognized Lt. Edith Elida Torres, an FDNY member who responded to the attacks of September 11 on Saturday, July 17 and Luke Gasparre, an army veteran who was a beloved long-serving usher for the New York Mets on Sunday, July 18. Lt. Torres is memorialized at the intersection of 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 21<sup>st</sup> Street/ Luke Gasparre is remembered at the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue

and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. Photos of each event are available here: [Lt. Torres](#); [Luke Gasparre](#).

“One of the things that makes Western Queens so special is the people who dedicate their lives to service and enrich our neighborhoods with their lives,” said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. “I’m honored to recognize two such individuals, Lt. Edith Torres and Luke Gasparre, whose lives of service and love of our community have made them role models for generations to come.”

These street co-namings were enacted by a city council law passed earlier this year by former Council Member Costa Constantinides.

On Saturday, Senator Gianaris honored Lt. Edith Torres, a 23-year FDNY paramedic veteran who, while off-duty, rushed to the World Trade Center site on September 11, 2001, where she worked the debris pile and rescued survivors. She worked out of Battalion 49 in Astoria and was then promoted to Lieutenant in 2005. She had begun her career as a volunteer EMT at age 20 with the Jackson Heights-Elmhurst Volunteer Ambulance Corps. She passed away from a-9/11 related illness in 2017.

**The Torres Family** said, “Our family will always love Edith and never forget her sacrifice for New York. As she liked to say, 'I respond to all emergency calls with the same purpose - to save and support lives. I'm not a hero, it's my job' - and that is the kind of selflessness she showed to her community. We are just pleased that everyone who passes by this corner in

the future will know who our Edith was and be able to reflect on her life and work.”

**FDNY Commissioner Daniel Nigro** said, “Edith was an important member of the FDNY – her work saved the lives of New Yorkers and she served with pride in the world’s greatest Fire Department. Off-duty on 9/11, she responded, and spent many hours at the site, working to provide medical care that day and for countless days afterward. It is that selfless work that led to the illness that claimed her life – and our gratitude to Edith will not diminish even as time passes, and our obligation to her family will not be forgotten.”

**Gary Smiley, of FDNY Local 2507**, said, “On behalf of the FDNY EMS Uniformed Officers Union and the FDNY Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics, and Fire Inspectors Union, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to State Senator Gianaris as well as all of the City and state elected officials for making this so deserved honor to WTC hero, Lt. Paramedic Edith Torres, who paid the ultimate sacrifice for her heroic efforts during the rescue and recovery efforts at the WTC site.”

**Costa Constantinides, Former New York City Council Member**, said, “Lt. Edith Torres was a true New York hero who served her community with distinction during its darkest hours. I’m honored we can celebrate her life and work in this momentous way.”

On Sunday, Senator Gianaris recognized Luke Gasparre, a member of the United States Army who fought in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He was a longtime employee of the United States Postal Service and among the longest-serving ushers in the history of the New York Mets organization, serving since 1964 until his passing in February, 2020. Senator

Gianaris inducted Gasparre into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame in 2016.

**Roseanna Gasparre, daughter of Luke Gasparre,** said, “Our entire family and friends are here today to honor our Father, Luke N. Gasparre. Let's never forget his sacrifice and courage for the freedom we live today. My Dad has taught us that to be kind was better than to be cruel, he taught us that to have an open heart was better than a closed heart. He taught us how to be strong and his positive spirit, which he always took in stride. He always continued to spread his good cheer and good will to all and it was infectious. His generosity will live in each and every one of us. There is a saying when someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure. He truly was a treasure to each of us in his own special way. Those of us will always remember him always wearing a smile, his kind words and his many funny jokes and sayings. He had so many qualities that we all learned from. There really are not enough words to convey how grateful and thankful we all are and truly blessed to the Borough of Queens, Senator Michael Gianaris and former Council Member Costa Constantinides for recognizing this great man, Luke N. Gasparre. We will all be reminded of this beautiful honor when we pass by the corner of 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Astoria, named after our father Luke N. Gasparre. I know my Dad is looking down smiling from Heaven. My Dad’s memory and legacy will live on in our lives forever. We are honored for the privilege to have known and loved such a beautiful person. His Legacy will live on because of this great tribute to him. Daddy you have been and always will be a Precious Treasure. God bless you all.”

**Costa Constantinides, Former New York City Council Member** said, “Luke Gasparre was a hero in every way. As a war hero in World War II, he served our country with valor. Once home, he continued to serve his community through civic activism and work. Mr. Gasparre spent a lifetime giving back and I was proud to ensure that we honor his sacrifices and contributions

to our country and our community. Thank you for Senator Gianaris for making sure we can celebrate Mr. Gasparre's life.”

**Jen Wilson, the Chief Operating Officer of Army Week,** said “Luke Gasparre was a treasured and adored member of our families and our organization. Many of the best and brightest and most poignant moments in our short history involved Luke. He became as synonymous with Army Week as Chris and I are. At every event he needed his own photographer because the line to meet him and take a picture with him was always out the door. He was an extraordinary man and his mark on us and this city will remain for the ages.”

**Amy Gibbs, USPS Strategic Communications Specialist,** said, “We are delighted and proud that one of our own, veteran and longtime postal employee Luke Gasparre, will be honored in this meaningful way. Our letter carriers, who will deliver mail along this newly renamed street, will connect the dots of civil service with each delivery. We are proud to be one of the largest veteran employers in America and the heroes among us that service the 161 million addresses each day deserve to be recognized. None more so than Luke Gasparre, who lived his life with passion and purpose.”