

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 4, 2022
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Senator Helming Works to Honor Local Veteran Ralph Calabrese by Designating Portion of State Route 21 in His Name

Senator Pam Helming has introduced legislation (S.8085) to name a portion of the state highway system after local veteran Ralph Calabrese, who passed away last December. The bill designates an approximately 3.3 mile stretch of State Route 21 in the City and Town of Canandaigua and Town of Hopewell as “Ralph Calabrese Highway.”

Senator Pam Helming said, “Mr. Calabrese was an American hero, a fierce advocate for his fellow veterans, and my friend. It is my honor to pay him respect by introducing this legislation to name a portion of State Route 21 in his name. Our community and state is indebted to Mr. Calabrese not only for his service in the Korean War, but for his leadership here at home to save the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and fight for the benefits and support every veteran deserves. We can honor his legacy by continuing his commitment to our veterans and military families, and inspiring younger generations to know and appreciate their sacrifice and contributions.”

Dominic Calabrese, Ralph Calabrese’s son, wrote the following to Senator Helming after learning of her legislation: “As his son, I had firsthand knowledge of what a good and great man he was, especially where the veterans were concerned. He would be so proud, as am I, that you feel such respect for him. This is an honor that will keep his legacy alive in everyone that passes through that corridor of Route 21. Thank you again for remembering my dad with this great sign of respect and gratitude for all that he did.”

Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan, who is sponsoring the bill in the State Assembly, said, “Ralph A. Calabrese was a man who loved his country and his community like no other. His dedicated service to our nation and efforts to support our veterans were truly laudable, and it is because of him the Canandaigua VA Medical Center has been able to continue their important work in support of our service members. I can think of few people from our community worthy of this recognition like Ralph, so I am eager to see this legislation passed to memorialize his legacy for future generations.”

The “Ralph Calabrese Highway” would begin on Route 21 at E. Gibson and N. Main Streets in Canandaigua, and end at Route 488 in the hamlet of Chapin in the Town of Hopewell.

Ralph is widely credited for saving the Canandaigua VA Medical Center when the federal government recommended closing the facility decades ago. He launched an extensive grassroots campaign – organizing community rallies, collecting thousands of letters of support, speaking at hearings, and battling Washington.

Ralph dedicated his life to advocating for his fellow veterans and his community. He was inducted to the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame in 2012. Ralph was a Korean War veteran most often seen proudly wearing his Korea Veteran cap. For his service, he earned a Bronze Service Star, the Korean Service Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Ambassador for Peace Medal.

Ralph passed away on December 5, 2021 at the Canandaigua VA. Upon his passing, Senator Helming [wrote a column](#) honoring him and remembering their friendship.

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