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**MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO AND FIRE COMMISSIONER DANIEL A. NIGRO  
PRESIDE OVER GRADUATION OF 280 PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTERS**

*Graduating class raises number of female firefighters to highest total in Department history*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro today presided over a graduation ceremony for 280 Probationary Firefighters. This graduating class represents the growing diversity of the Department, with 37 percent of the Probationary Firefighters identifying as minorities—including 15 percent as Black and 20 percent as Hispanic—as well as four women. In addition, the class features 51 veterans of the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard.

The graduation of four women as part of this class of Probationary Firefighters brings the total number of female firefighters serving with FDNY to 44—surpassing the previous high.

The new Firefighters, known as “probies,” graduated after completing a rigorous training program at the Department’s Training Academy located on Randall’s Island. The Mayor and Commissioner congratulated the new class in a ceremony held at the Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn, where they were joined by several hundred family members, friends and fellow firefighters.

“It takes a special kind of person to be a New York City firefighter—you have to be able to think clearly and quickly under extreme pressure and be ready to respond to any emergency at any time. Yet what makes this job so challenging, also makes it exceptionally rewarding. Each of you has proven your ability at the Academy, and I know you will succeed in the field,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Day in and day out, New York’s Bravest face the most extreme challenges to protect their fellow New Yorkers. I congratulate today’s graduates and am confident that they will put their training to good use and serve this City with bravery and dedication.”

“This diverse class of Probationary Firefighters continues the Department’s long-stated goal of better representing the city we serve; and boasts an extraordinary group of 51 veterans who have already proven themselves defending our nation,” said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**. “Today these Probies join the ranks of those proud to wear the uniform, represent FDNY and

serve this City, and with each graduating class coming from a wide range of backgrounds, the Department grows stronger and more representative of the very best of our city—and our country.”

“I am so proud of the four women graduating today and for the United Women Firefighters to reach this important milestone. Each of the women who made it to this rank has worked extremely hard to achieve their goals and deserve accolades for taking part of making history. We look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio and the FDNY in breaking barriers with each successive graduation and increasing the number of women on the job. The 44 women who proudly serve this city all serve as great role models to the many girls and young women who aspire to be one of NYC’s bravest,” said **Sarinya Sarisrakul, President of the United Women Firefighters (UWF)**

Probationary Firefighter Brandon Reilly was named valedictorian, and Probationary Firefighter Joseph Seelig was named salutatorian. The Physical Fitness Award was presented to Probationary Firefighter Steven Ramhold.

Probationary Firefighter Josephine Smith is the daughter of Kevin Smith, a member of HAZMAT 1 who died in the line of duty on September 11, 2001.

This class also includes 26 Probationary Firefighters who passed a promotional exam to the rank of Firefighter after previously serving as Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians with the FDNY Bureau of EMS.

Over their 18 weeks at the FDNY Training Academy, the class was extensively trained in all aspects of their job as firefighters, including fire suppression and medical response, hazardous materials training, collapse and confined space rescue training, auto extrication, building inspections and procedures for engine and ladder operations. The Probationary Firefighters will be assigned to firehouses throughout the city, where they will gain field experience under the guidance of senior Firefighters and Fire Officers.

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