

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 2, 2021, 11:00 AM
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, COMMISSIONER NIGRO DELIVER
REMARKS AT THE FDNY MEDAL DAY 2021 CEREMONY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Everybody, it is so good to be back together again. This is the largest Fire Department ceremony we have had in a long, long time. And it means we are all coming back together. It's a good feeling, isn't it, to be back together in person?

[Applause]

We are here to celebrate these heroes, but I also want to say to all of you, family members, loved ones, no one does it alone. These great heroes became heroes because you stood by them every step along the way. So, I want you to look around, look at the people next to you, look at everyone who's here who helped create this day, who helped make these people great, give yourselves a round of applause too, because you deserve it.

[Applause]

Thank you to all the leadership of the FDNY up here on the dais, thank you to the union leaders who represent all the members of this department. Today, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. We've all been through hell together, but we are coming out of it. And one thing that was clear throughout 2020 was the FDNY was always there. No matter what COVID threw at us, the FDNY persevered. There are many extraordinary moments in the history of this agency. 2020 will go into the history books as one of those times when people did great things against the toughest odds. And we celebrate today 70 outstanding individuals, 70 who are the best of us, the best of the FDNY, the best of New York City.

Everybody, everyone that we celebrate today has an extraordinary story. Everyone made a decision to save lives and puts that decision into action every day. We are grateful to every one of you for what you do, not just the acts of heroism we celebrate today, but what you do every day. And we're grateful to all the men and women of the FDNY who are here with us. But when you hear some of these stories, it reminds you of how extraordinary it is that some people have the courage and the strength and the commitment to step forward. I'm going to give you just two examples. Washington Heights last September, a six-story building on fire, a child dangling from a window, engulfed in flames, all around a child. A child who has only seconds to be saved or that young life will be gone forever. And who arrives on the scene? Firefighter Abraham G. Miller, Ladder Company 23 and Firefighter Jairo M. Sosa, Ladder Company 34.

[Applause]

At that moment, there were only two firefighters on that roof. They have a choice to make, the choice they make is one of bravery and courage and decisiveness. And they perform a rope rescue, and they save that child's life. A child is alive today. Thank you and God bless you for that.

[Applause]

I'm going to give you one more – on a highway, a crash, a dump truck crashes into four parked cars, a driver trapped unconscious. The cab begins to fill with fire, another life on the line, a life that will be lost unless someone acts quickly. Who arrives? EMTs Samuel Wright and Gary Hui, Station 59 saved that driver's life. Thank you and God bless you.

[Applause]

I conclude with this, in 2020, we met our toughest challenge as New Yorkers. It is a very clear, true statement, we could not have survived 2020 as a city without each and every one of you and all of your colleagues at the FDNY. You saw us through. It was our toughest hour. It was your finest hour. On behalf of 8.5 million New Yorkers, thank you and God bless you all.

[Applause]

Battalion Chief Mark Guerra, FDNY: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next, we'll hear from our Fire Commissioner, Dan Nigro.

[Applause]

Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro: Good morning, and congratulations to all our members whose tremendous bravery we celebrate today. Medal Day is always the best day of the year. And this year we're doing it twice. This past April, we held our 2020 Medal Day celebration, which was postponed nearly a year due to the pandemic. And now today, thanks to the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, we're celebrating our members once again, this time for the heroic acts last year. I'm thrilled to be able to welcome our families. We've greatly missed you for these events. Your love and support is essential to the brave work of our members each year. Last, but certainly not least, welcome to our members here in the crowd. Your energy, especially on this day, is what makes this such a special event year after year.

As I listened to the many acts of valor recounted on Medal Day, I couldn't be prouder of our members. Heroically, you advance forward through intense heat and smoke. You respond to each call that comes your way and provide outstanding medical care. No matter the dangers to yourself, you always go to help. Our members never back down when they find themselves in a life and death situation for a New Yorker, a child trapped by a fire, an unconscious occupant overcome by smoke or carbon monoxide, an individual in desperate need of medical care. When someone is trapped and needs to be rescued, New Yorkers turn to the FDNY, and you rise to the challenge every day. When it comes to rising to the challenge, look no further than Firefighter Abraham Miller of Ladder 34. He went to the roof of a six-story building in Washington Heights. He saw a child dangling from a window, a building engulfed in flames. He never hesitated. He and his fellow firefighters executed a perfect roof rope rescue to save that child's life. Today, he receives the highest award for bravery for a firefighter, the Chief of Department Peter J. Ganci

Jr. Medal. Many lives were saved from the fire as multiple companies worked as one to rescue trapped residents and get them to lifesaving emergency medical care our members of EMS provide.

The highest award for members of EMS operations is the Christopher J. Prescott Medal. And this year it's awarded to Emergency Medical Technicians Gary Hui and Samuel Wright of Station 59 for their daring rescue of a driver trapped inside a dump truck that crashed into multiple vehicles. Together, they removed the occupant seconds before flames engulfed the vehicle. They began medical care and transported him to the hospital. A remarkable, selfless, and brave act.

2020 threw every challenge possible at our EMTs, paramedics, and firefighters. And all of you, our medal recipients, those here in attendance, and all our members watching from home or elsewhere, you rose to meet the challenges head on. The acts we celebrate today are a result of the training you've received, which I can unequivocally say is second to none. You are trained by the best to be the best. And that fact is always abundantly clear on Medal Day. Because of the brave acts of highly trained members today, we hear stories of lives saved. In a year filled with sorrow and loss, these are stories of bravery and hope and a reminder that no matter how dark the times may be, how difficult the challenge or dangerous the situation, the FDNY will always be there. Your actions we celebrate today represent the greatest traditions of our beloved department.

To all our members here and those watching elsewhere, please know that now more than ever, you mean so much to the city we serve, know that your bravery is inspiring, and that millions of New Yorkers are relying on you to keep them safe. To our medal recipients, know that we are immensely proud of you, both your accomplishments and for your steadfast commitment to our life-saving mission. Thank you all for ensuring that the FDNY continues to be the best that it can be the greatest fire department in the world.

[Applause]

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