



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 7, 2015

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE ANNUAL FDNY
MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Chief Gala.

I want to thank the [inaudible] leadership of this department – Commissioner Nigro, First Deputy Commissioner Turner, Chief of Department Leonard – for their leadership. I want to thank those who represent the men and women who do this work every day – Steve Cassidy, President of the UFA; Jake Lemonda, President of the UFOA; Vincent Variale, President of the EMS Officers Union; and Izzy Miranda, President of the Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics, and Fire Inspectors. Thank you to all.

It's humbling – it's humbling for me, and it's humbling for all of us, to be here today, to stand before the Firefighters Memorial. It makes us think, it makes us feel a lot to be in the presence of a memorial that speaks to such intense commitment to generations of people who believed in protecting others so deeply that they were willing to give their lives.

For 108 years, this memorial has stood as a solemn testament to bravery, to sacrifice, to those who did what most people could never imagine doing – to those who looked at the dangers, and somehow overcame them.

Today, we honor seven men lost in the past year – six firefighters and one member of EMS. Our hearts are with their family, with their friends, with all their loved ones, who are feeling so much today. And we honor, at the same time, all the other members of the FDNY who gave their lives in the 150 years that this extraordinary organization has protected New York City.

In the monument, you see two figures, one on each side. One represents "Courage." The other represents "Duty." They are not just words to the men and women of the FDNY. This is a way of life – it is literally a code by which you live, and it is a high calling, and a noble calling.

There is a tradition – an unbroken tradition in the 150 years of this department, and even farther back, to the 1600s, when New York City first took shape, and there were men who protected others whenever fire threatened.

All of this tradition – we see it play out each and every day on the streets of our city. We saw it just this past weekend in Borough Park, Brooklyn. The fire – we've seen so many powerful scenes of it, the fire that required

200 firefighters to rush to the scene and to bring it under control. And they did so with extraordinary skill. Something that could have turned into a deeper tragedy was held in check by these brave men and women.

Our hearts are heavy, because two of our fellow New Yorkers were lost in that fire. But at the same time, we have to be proud – we have to be grateful – for what the FDNY does every day. We have to recognize how many lives are saved every single day because of their professionalism, because of their skill. We have to recognize what a difference it makes, how reassuring it is to the people of this city to know that the very most talented people in this work, anywhere in this nation, are here on the job protecting us.

It was a dangerous situation in Borough Park. Everyone knew those buildings were in an unstable situation. And you saw, and I saw firsthand, what it means to be part of the most extraordinary organization, because the skill with which that crisis was approached not only saved the lives of others, but protected our firefighters at the same time.

You know, when we hear the sirens, when we hear the rumble of the firetrucks, of course, fear goes through any of us, but at the same time, there's a sense of hope, because it means help is on the way. And people have faith that once the FDNY arrives, people will be safe.

Our firefighters, our EMTs rise to the occasion, no matter how difficult that occasion is. They commit extraordinary feats of bravery, and act like it's an everyday thing. That's part of what we always have to remember – it takes remarkable individuals to run towards danger. It's not for everyone. It's for a chosen few who are good enough.

The Greek historian Thucydides said, "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it."

That is certainly true of those we are honoring today, and it's true of all of those who are part of New York's Bravest, and why you are respected, literally, all over the world.

On behalf of all 8.5 million New Yorkers, thank you for your service, for your sacrifice, for your courage. And God bless you all.

###