



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE STREET CO-NAMING CEREMONY HONORING DETECTIVE JOSEPH LEMM

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, and I want to thank every single person who is here today gathered in memory of a great man. It matters that we gather. It matters that we do things to keep a memory alive, and everyone's presence here helps.

This is a commemoration of a life lived with courage, a life of service, a life that expressed a deep love for others because this life was lived in a way that was so exemplary – a life cut off but preserved deeply in our memories whether you're here in the Bronx or anywhere in this city or even back in Nebraska.

I'm going to talk about what Detective Joseph Lemm means and meant to all of us but I want to acknowledge a few folks and thank them up front. Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea, thank you and all the leadership of the NYPD present; our elected officials, Senator Jeff Klein and Council Member Mark Gjonaj. A particular thanks to the Council member for helping to make sure this street renaming happened. The union leadership present – particularly Mike Paladino of the Detectives. Everyone here in honor of Joe Lemm – but a particular thanks to members of families of fallen officers who have stood by each other.

And I can't tell you how important – that is such an example, a powerful example. I cannot say in words what it means to the people of this city to see those family members be there for other families. I particularly want to thank Genesis Familia for being here and Lisa Tuozzolo, both of whom have been extraordinary examples to this city. Let's thank both of them.

[Applause]

Now, we know that Detective Joe Lemm's colleagues called him Superman, and we see this beautiful painting – it says it all. And yes, he looked the part, that's one reason they called him Superman but that's not, to me, the most essential reason. It was the kind of courage that he exhibited.

[Inaudible]

– this nation, three tours of duty in the Air Force, one in Iraq and two in Afghanistan. He gave his all by giving his life for his country, and then we got to know the people who meant so much

to Joe, and we always wish we never got to know a family this way but when it happens we see who a family really is.

And when it came to the Lemm family we saw such extraordinary dignity, and such warm and good hearts. I want you to know this family deserves our particular honor not only for the way they handled a tragedy but for all they did to make Joe the man he was.

Christine, Brooke, Ryan, and Joe's brother, Brian – his greatness was also because of you, never forget that. No one does it alone. We know that what we do today cannot take away your grief but we do know we can keep the memory of Joe alive and we do know that if there's one place that stands by a family literally forever it's the NYPD.

I want to say something to Brooke and to Ryan, and I want to say something from my own personal experience that I hope will help you because losing a father is one of the hardest things that can happen.

I lost my father when I was still young and like you my dad had served our nation in World War II in the United States Army. He fought [inaudible], and he came back but he came back with deep scars of every kind.

But I'll tell you that even though I lost him way too young, I always knew he was a hero. And that is a powerful thing to carry with you in life. You know sometimes children lose –

[Inaudible]

– father's presence in those moments as a reassuring force because we can say with such clarity what a good man he was and that a hero walked among us.

To all the members of the NYPD and all the members of our armed services, my condolences to you but also my gratitude. I know this loss still stings deeply but I thank you for your devotion to Joe and his family.

And I'll finish on a happy note because there is still, even in a sad moment like this, so much good to remember. This place was such a positive place in the life of Christine and Joe and their friends. So this is the place that deserves to be named after him. And people will walk by here for, not only years for generations, and they'll see that name and they'll know a great man was honored.

On behalf of all 8.6 million New Yorkers, God bless you. Thank you.

[Applause]

Sergeant Kevin Heavey, NYPD: Thank you, Mayor de Blasio. It's now my pleasure to introduce Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea.

[Applause]

Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea, NYPD: Christine, Brooke, Ryan, family and friends, Mayor de Blasio and elected officials, men and women of the NYPD, particularly Bronx Warrants that are in attendance today, members of our armed services, thank you. A special thanks also to Genesis and Lisa for their attendance and support today.

Welcome all and thank you for joining us today to celebrate a husband and father, and a member of our armed services, a New York City detective – as the Mayor alluded, a superhero.

Joe's life should serve as an inspiration to all New Yorkers for the life he lived. It's a story about family, friends, love, duty, and service. It's a story about life lived to the fullest with a lifetime of accomplishments rammed into too short of a time. It's a story about a debt that really can never be fully paid by the residents of this city and [inaudible].

Christine, we were privileged to have Joe as one of the Finest. I wish we could clone him, quite frankly, because he is the epitome of what I think of when I think about a New York City police officer.

We promise that we will never forget his dedication, his service, and his friendship. And I'll finish by saying God bless the Lemm family, God bless the NYPD, and God bless the United States of America.

[Applause]

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