

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Remarks at Hometown Heroes Plaque Dedication

April 28, 2022

President Jessica Lappin, Downtown Alliance: Good morning, everyone. I'm the president of the Downtown Alliance, Jessica Lappin. Today is a day to celebrate courage and service. There was a time when we all paused at 7:00 PM to bang our pots and pans and to thank all of you for helping our city when we were being ravaged by COVID. We felt helpless, but you were helping. There's a reason that you're called essential. Our beloved city cannot run without you. COVID cases may rise and fall, but your dedication, your passion, it endures.

Lappin: Our utility workers, our emergency personnel, our grocery and pharmacy workers, our sanitation and PD and firefighters, the men and women who kept our subways and our buses running, we will never take you for granted. You deliver our mail and our babies in the face of fear and courage. That's why we celebrated you with that parade on that lovely July day as we have celebrated others for a hundred years here in Lower Manhattan. This is the neighborhood where our city, where our country began, and we are going to continue to survive, to thrive and to grow because of all of you. So thank you. And we are delighted to have with us today, the Mayor of the City of New York Eric Adams.

[Applause]

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you. Well said. I think you said it best for all of us. I really want to thank you. And I recall watching as we added the ranks of our heroes and heroes and the 200 parades that we've done down the Canyon of Heroes. Many of the parades were for those who want to ring or were able to accomplish a great championship in the sports feat. But I don't think there's no greater representation of who should be in the Canyon of Heroes than the men and women who responded during a tragic moment in our history during COVID-19. Being on the front line with them as the borough president, watching our doctors, our nurses, our transit employees, EMT, firefighters, police officers, and everyday people. Those who stocked

our shelves in the grocery stores, who delivered our UberEats, who made sure that our schools were open to provide the meals on the go.

Mayor Adams: These were the heroes of our city. And sometimes you reflect in the moment of the despair like we did in 9/11. And although we give a great remembrance to those who we lost, I remember 9/12, we got up and we showed what our city is made of, an entire country responded to that. 9/11, we were the epicenter. COVID-19, we were the epicenter. And when New York turned around and will continue to turn around, the country's going to turn around. But we don't do it because we have great buildings and structures. It's not because of the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty. It's because the everyday New Yorkers are doing what is right. And so this plaque that we're dedicating to those who are part of the hero parade, we're making this dedication to have a permanent symbol of what we were able to overcome.

Mayor Adams: New Yorkers are resilient. I say this over and over again. We do not run in the face of fear. We stand up, we face it and we cycle out of it. And it is because of the everyday people we are standing here today. So you add to the 200 parades that we participated in, but I don't think anyone is more greater than the one we did for the men and women who provided the essential task to make sure our city was able to do the essential things we needed to get through COVID-19. Thank you on behalf of the 8.8 million people of the city, and as the mayor of the City of New York, I want to say we thank you for what you have done and what you will continue to do. Thank you so much.

Lappin: Thank you.

[Applause]

Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine: All right.

Lappin: Great. We're going to hear from a couple of our other esteemed elected officials and then a few of our essential workers. So we have the Manhattan Borough President, Mark Levine with us.

Borough President Levine: Thank you. Thank you so much, Jessica and to the Downtown Alliance. And thank you, Mr. Mayor, for your eloquent words. You know,

there were days in March and April of 2020 when hundreds of New Yorkers were dying every single day. At some point, over 500 of us were dying every single day. Some of us had the privilege at that time, and it was absolutely a privilege to work from home.

Borough President Levine: Some New Yorkers didn't have those kind of jobs because our city needed them to show up, to protect us, to serve us, to care for us, to keep us moving, to keep our infrastructure running, to keep our communication systems functioning. Those New Yorkers could have walked away and they didn't. They were there for us at enormous risk to themselves. And while we will never know the true toll, it is fair to say that thousands wound up hospitalized and paying the ultimate price, thousands, to serve our city.

Borough President Levine: And so it is richly deserved that they have been honored here in this Canyon of Heroes, where we have honored so many world leaders, some of whom deeply questionable moral stature. We've honored sports teams and that's great. But as far as I'm aware, the only instances where we have honored regular working people is military parades. Well, I'll tell you, the essential workers here and the essential workers of the city have just done the equivalent of wartime service and they deserve this honor too. And I am thrilled now for generations to come, New Yorkers will see this memorialized right here on Broadway so that no one will forget the service and the sacrifice that you have done for our city. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Applause]

Lappin: Thank you. Next is our City Council Member, Christopher Marte.

[Applause]

City Council Member Chistopher Marte: Hello everyone. First of all, I want to thank Downtown Alliance for organizing this. Two and a half years ago when streets were empty, you put on your mask and went to work. When no one was riding the subways, you put on your gloves, you swiped your cards and you went to work. When thousands of people were going to Bellevue Hospital, to all the hospitals across this city sick and in fear, you were there ready to save.

City Council Member Marte: I have a friend who's a doctor at Bellevue who got sick taking care of patients. Once he was done with quarantine, he didn't hesitate. He went back to work because he knew, and everyone behind me knew, that you are the safety net of this city. You save this city and you made sure that the future is bright. And so the least that we can do downtown here in the heart of New York City is honor the people who saved us and who guided us to a better future. Thank you everyone here from sanitation workers, postal workers, from doctors, teachers, grocery workers, you are the real New Yorkers who made this day possible and made our future bright. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

Lappin: Now we're going to hear from a few of our essential workers. We're going to start with Sherry Wilcher. She is an MTA Group Station Manager, who also was really crucial to the success of the vaccination rollout. And we would love to hear from you, Sherry.

[Applause]

Group Station Manager Sherry Wilcher, Metropolitan Transportation

Authority: Good morning, everyone. I just want to be thankful. You know, being an essential worker was very important during the pandemic and even henceforth and further as we move on recovering in the city. You know, we are still as essential workers still trying to help and move the city and we will continue. And I just want to thank the city for the support, for the acknowledgement that they have given on to all essential workers and the recognition. Thank you.

[Applause]

Lappin: Thank you. Feliciano Rafael. Where's Feliciano? Feliciano is a USPS letter carrier for a 30 year vet. Sherry's a 29 year vet I believe. He works at the Church Street station. I also want to say that he served as a carrier for 2 World Trade Center in those upper floors for a number of years as well.

[Applause]

Letter Carrier Feliciano Rafael, United States Postal Service: Thank you very much. I'd just like to say thank you to everyone behind me here because I relied on them also during the pandemic. And thank you to the public, especially the children who would put signs on the doors with their little crayons. I appreciate it. Thank you.

[Applause]

Lappin: And next is Maureen Kreider, who is at Con Edison. She's a nurse practitioner in their Employee Wellness Center, marched in the parade in July.

[Applause]

Nurse Practitioner Maureen Kreider, Con Edison: Thank you. Thank you. Thanks to everyone behind me. And I just want to say it's a privilege and an honor to represent the unsung essential heroes of Con Edison who kept the electricity going and the ventilators going and the lights on throughout the pandemic. I'm very proud to represent them.

[Applause]

Lappin: So with that, I want to thank everybody who's here, all of the agencies who are represented, obviously the deputy mayors who are here, the power women, who are continuing to keep the city going. We're going to walk just across the street for the actual unveiling and hope you will join us as we do that. So thank you very much.

[Applause]

Crowd: Seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.

Lappin: Come on. There we go.

[Applause]

Borough President Levine: Wow.

City Council Member Marte: Awesome.

Mayor Adams: Love that. Love that.

City Council Member Marte: Very, very powerful. Beautiful.

Mayor Adams: Congratulations.

City Council Member Marte: Congrats. Thank you workers.

Essential Worker: Thank you very much. I love this moment.

Kreider: Thank you. It's an honor. Thank you. Thank you so much for inviting me.