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

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you so much, Chief. Everyone, I'm looking around here and I'm seeing something absolutely extraordinary, and it's a powerful, powerful moment. We're here in this incredible site, and this doesn't look like a typical Medal Day, but, to me, it looks like something very powerful – it means we're coming back. We are so proud to say Medal Day is back and New York City is back. We are coming back together.

[Applause]

It is just beautiful here. You can see so many of the things that make us proud about the city. You can see the Statue of Liberty in the harbor. For so many of us, every time we look at that lady, we are reminded of where we come from and how blessed we are to be here in this country and in this city. I think every time about my grandparents who came from a small town – each of them, a small town in Southern Italy, a place so far away in every sense. And they came to this great city and they had dreams. And like every family here, they were able to realize their dreams. And, today, all of you who have earned these honors, you're part of an incredible tradition here in this city of people believing they could do something great. I know your families are incredibly proud of you right now. We're all proud of you, because you are the best. You're the best of the FDNY and you're the best of New York City, and this is the right place to celebrate you.

So, when we have Medal Day, it is serious, of course, because it's about achievements that are so extraordinary, and lifesaving, and brave, and courageous, but it's also a celebration. So, I want to say to every one of you, you have earned a celebration after this ceremony today. I hope you're going to gather with everyone in your house. I hope you're going to gather with your family. I hope you're going to enjoy some beautiful food. Maybe there will be a libation or two – maybe – to celebrate these achievements. But what does it mean? For all of us, it means that we honor people who do something beyond the imagination that most of us have of what a single human being could do.

Everyone up here, I want to thank all the leadership of the FDNY. I want to thank everyone who works to make this organization great. I want to thank the unions that represent you. Everyone works together for a common goal, to continue this tradition of the greatest Fire Department in this country and anywhere on earth. And Medal Day reminds us that you never stopped. You were hit with a global pandemic, but you never, ever stopped. All of you kept going, saving lives, protecting people, and it was one of the things that held the city together.

Today, we honor 46 – 46 recipients of this set of awards, because you did something in the midst of the greatest crisis we've ever faced. You have stood out and you showed us something amazing. I want to highlight very briefly six brave members – Engine Company 248, who rushed into a six-story building in Brooklyn, saved three fellow New Yorkers, all unconscious, two of them children. Something that you all trained to do, and you did, and lives changed forever, families changed forever because of your bravery. I want to commend Paramedics O'Shaughnessy and Rodriguez from Station 4 – paramedics who went into a basement filled with carbon monoxide in Manhattan, found an unconscious victim. Let's all be clear, if those two brave individuals are not there, that life is lost. But someone's alive today because of them. Every one of you has a story and every one of you builds the legacy of the FDNY, and we are grateful. We're grateful for all you did in 2019, that we celebrate today. And we're grateful for all you did in 2020 to see us through. And we're grateful in 2021, as this city comes back, that you will help to lead the way. And I'll conclude with this – one of the things I've heard over years and years in public service is the gratitude that New Yorkers feel for each and every one of you, because, as New Yorkers, we hear a lot of sirens, sometimes we don't love that sound, but there's always something that we know about that sound – it means help is on the way. And we always know help is on the way. We never have to wonder for a moment. And we always know that the person that shows up is going to be one of the very best. We celebrate that today. And we thank all of you and we celebrate all of you. And I say, God bless you. And God bless the FDNY.

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

**Fire Commissioner Dan Nigro:** Good morning, and congratulations to all our firefighters, EMT's, paramedics, fire marshals, and officers whose tremendous bravery we celebrate today. Our annual Medal Day is a moment of recognition for all that this department does to save the lives of New Yorkers from perilous conditions. There's nothing quite like the love, appreciation, and comradery on display each year in Medal Day. And to those watching this event, the families and friends of our honorees and fellow FDNY members watching from work or home, know that you are all terribly missed.

Now, this Medal Day is certainly unique. We're on a rooftop, not the steps of City Hall. It's been delayed nearly a year, and it's taking place during a pandemic that has taxed every member of our department. We have lost 14 members of our department to this terrible virus. Our families have suffered. There has been loss among your family and friends. There has been isolation and difficulty for everyone – you have felt it and your children and your families have felt it. Still, you soldier on, you push forward. You train, you work hard, you show up, and you fight to accomplish the department's lifesaving mission. And you've done it all during this year when COVID-19 has been all-consuming and on your mind on every call. That's the mark of the FDNY, always going above and beyond to save lives. Going above and beyond is especially represented by several of our recipients this year, notably Firefighter John McCoy of Squad 288, who is the inaugural recipient of the Chief of Department Peter J. Ganci Medal. Pete Ganci was our Chief of Department on September 11th. He gave his life leading all of us that day. He was my friend. He was a good man, a leader who inspired others, and he was a firefighter who performed many meritorious acts of his own. So often he stood before our members on Medal

Day to celebrate their courageous efforts. His legacy of service should be forever connected to this day when we celebrate bravery in its truest form. Firefighter McCoy lived up to that noble legacy by performing a daring rescue of a man from a warehouse fire in Queens, just as the building began to collapse due to explosions. Truly remarkable work and worthy of this new medal for the highest honor for a firefighter.

The highest honor for our EMS members, the Christopher J. Prescott Medal goes to Paramedics Nile O'Shaughnessy and Joshua Rodriguez, of EMS Station 4 for providing critical emergency medical care to construction workers. Our EMT's, paramedics, and EMS officers have certainly demonstrated they will always go to any lengths or heights, despite the many dangers they so often face to ensure the safety of their patients. Paramedics O'Shaughnessy and Rodriguez truly exemplify that fact.

And while we talk of true bravery, we are reminded daily of the sacrifice this job all too often demands. Today, we post humorously award, the Emerald Society Medal to Firefighter Daniel Foley of Rescue Company 3, for heroically rescuing two young children from a Bronx fire in February, 2019. Just one year after saving those two young lives, he lost his own to World Trade Center cancer. His brother, Firefighter Thomas Foley, also of Rescue Company 3, was one of the 343 FDNY members killed on September 11th, 2001. The Foley family epitomizes is the bravery, dedication, and sacrifice of this great department. And we will never forget Danny and Tommy. With us today to receive Dan's medal is his wife, Carrie. Please join me in welcoming her today.

[Applause]

All of our honorees displayed true bravery when they will call to act. They represented the greatest traditions of our beloved department. To all our members here and to those watching elsewhere, please know that now more than 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. And to our medal recipients, know that we are all immensely proud of you for your accomplishments and 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. Thank you.

[Applause]

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