



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham, Burdick, Local Officials, Advocates Dedicate John Jay HS Veterans Memorial Highway Designation

PETE HARCKHAM May 28, 2024

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State Sen. Harckham with (l-r) Grant Vialardi, Assemblymember Chris Burdick, Lewisboro Veterans Advisory Committee Chair John Lemke and Lewisboro Town Supervisor Tony Gonçalves standing near the newly designated John Jay High School Veterans Memorial Highway

Cross River, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblymember Chris Burdick, along with local officials and veterans’ advocates, officially dedicated today a section of Route 121 in the Town of Lewisboro as the “John Jay High School Veterans

Memorial Highway” today a special ceremony on the front lawn of John Jay High School. Joining the ceremony were first responders from around Lewisboro, community members and Boy Scouts in uniform.

Harckham and Burdick introduced legislation in July 2023 to rename the highway in front of John Jay High School in honor and memory of six veterans who were alumni and died in service. (Governor Hochul signed the legislation into law in November 2023.) The legislation also calls for the state Department of Transportation to install and maintain adequate signage regarding the designation.

The Route 121 designation follows the efforts of recent John Jay HS alumnus Grant Vialardi and John Lemke, chair of the Lewisboro Veterans Advisory Committee, to erect a monument at the high school commemorating the six fallen veterans.

Four of the John Jay High School alumni died in service during the Vietnam War—Pfc. Kenneth Richard Jaconetti, Lt. Cmdr. George Russell Matthews, Pfc. Philip Grant Chipchase and Lance Cpl. Howard J. Alaimo. The other two died in the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing—Cpl. James J. Jackwoski and Cpl. Bert D. Corcoran.

“It is very appropriate to have the road in front of John Jay High School dedicated to these fallen heroes,” said Lemke. “It’s important that the current John Jay students are aware of what these former students have sacrificed for their freedom.”

At today’s ceremony, Lemke informed the crowd that a seventh John Jay High School alumnus had been discovered recently to have died in service: Pfc. Anthony Joseph Pettignano in 1990 during Operation Just Cause in Panama. His name will be added to the Roll of Honor, Lemke said.

“This community-wide effort, spurred by Grant Vialardi and John Lemke, to ensure that these individuals will always be remembered is a profound and touching reminder of the sacrifices that members of our armed services and their families and loved ones make,” said Harckham. “It is important to commemorate the valor and heroism of our veterans, knowing that their courage and deeds stand as an abiding example for us all.”

“We can never fully express our gratitude to the John Jay High School alumni who died in service to our country, but with the renaming of this road, we will ensure their memories are never forgotten,” said Burdick. “My thanks to Grant Vialardi and the Lewisboro Veterans Advisory Committee for their inspiration and assistance in making this a reality.”

Nearby are the two new signs designating the section of Route 121, beginning at the intersection of Route 35 Old Post Road and ending at the intersection Gideon Reynolds Road, as the “John Jay High School Veterans Memorial Highway.”

Lewisboro Town Supervisor Tony Gonçalves said, “I am so proud of the work of the Lewisboro Veterans Advisory Committee, its chair John Lemke, Grant Vialardi, and all those who have supported the Committee. Let these signs be a reminder to all who drive this road of the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform in defending our freedoms in our country and around the world.”

The Katonah-Lewisboro School District approved in November 2022 the installation of a veterans’ memorial at John Jay High School to honor and commemorate respective alumni who had died during their armed forces service. Vialardi, then a senior at John Jay (and an intern in Assemblymember Burdick’s office), first proposed the memorial in conjunction with the Lewisboro Veterans Advisory Committee as part of what he called “Project Honor.” Along with the memorial project was Vialardi’s request to rename the portion of Route 121.

On Veterans Day 2022, the veterans' memorial was unveiled at the base of the flagpole outside Lewisboro Town House.

"I am incredibly proud of what Project Honor has accomplished and have been touched by the support our community has shown to it," said Vialardi. "I hope that this project serves as an example for others that, with enough hard work, anyone can make the change they want to see in the world. I'd again like to thank all everyone involved for all of the time they dedicated to this project and would encourage everyone in our community to do their part in honoring those who have sacrificed so that we may enjoy our freedom."

RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S4805

-
- Introduced
 - - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Directs the commissioner of motor vehicles to provide certain services on Fishers Island for a limited period of time

February 15, 2023

In Senate Committee Transportation

Sponsored by Anthony H. Palumbo

Do you support this bill?