



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

Senator Owen H. Johnson Honors Members of New York Task Force 1, Urban Search and Rescue Team that served in Haiti

OWEN H. JOHNSON March 9, 2010

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Photo left to right: Joseph Downey, Owen H. Johnson, Thomas Donnelly, William Reddan, and Richard Andersen

Senator Owen H. Johnson presented New York State Liberty Medals to four members of New York Task Force 1, Urban Search and Rescue Team for their outstanding efforts conducted in Port au Prince, Haiti between January 15th and January 25, 2010. The four were

among a team of 80 deployed to Haiti following the devastating earthquake which struck January 12th.

The Award Ceremony took place at the Deer Park Fire Department on Thursday, March 4, 2010. Those honored were Richard Andersen of Bohemia, Detective, NYPD Emergency Services Unit and Rescue Specialist, New York Task Force 1; Thomas Donnelly of Deer Park, Lieutenant, FDNY Rescue Company 1 and Search Team Manager, New York Task Force 1; Joseph Downey of West Islip, Battalion Chief, FDNY Rescue Battalion and Task Force Leader, New York Task Force 1; and William Reddan of Sayville, Lieutenant, FDNY Squad 252 and Technical Information Specialist, New York Task Force 1.

“I am very proud to honor Richard Andersen, Tom Donnelly, Joe Downey, and Bill Reddan with the Liberty Award. They, undoubtedly, are heroes in my eyes and deserve our praise,” Senator Johnson said. “Each left their families and the comfort of home to risk their lives to help others. Through their selfless and courageous efforts, 6 earthquake victims were brought to safety.” Among them, a 7 year old boy named Kiki and his 10 year old sister, portrayed worldwide in news images of the rescue. (Image attached.)

“When I read newspaper accounts and watched television coverage of New York Task Force 1’s deployment to Haiti and their subsequent rescue operations, I knew that these men truly deserved the recognition we give them tonight,” Senator Johnson added.

Senator Johnson also spoke of Joseph Downey’s father, the late Deputy Chief Ray Downey, longtime resident of the Hamlet of Deer Park and former Chief of Rescue Operations for the New York City Fire Department. He tragically perished with ninety of his men on September 11, 2001 when the World Trade Center was attacked. “I know that he would be extremely proud to know that his son, Joe, is successfully carrying on the family tradition of selfless sacrifice to help others in need.”

The New York State Liberty Award was created in 2000 and is one of the highest civilian honors that a New York resident can receive. It is awarded by the New York State Senate to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of fellow New Yorkers.