



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

# Hero First Responders Honored By The State Senate

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## *Four members of the Nunda Fire Department Awarded New York State Senate Liberty Medal*

ALBANY – Four member of the Nunda Fire Department who went above and beyond the call of duty in saving the lives of three community members were honored this week as the State Senate passed resolutions designating them as recipients of the New York State Senate Liberty Medal. Nunda Fire Department Chief Robert Walker, First Assistant Chief Travis Rawleigh, First Lieutenant Travis Deiter and Truck Captain Steve Gelser were each honored for their efforts to rescue three victims from an early morning fire on March 27, 2015, at a home on Parker Road in Portage.

The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established in 2014 as the highest honor a Senator can bestow upon a constituent and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers.

“Chief Walker, Assistant Chief Rawleigh, First Lieutenant Deiter, and Truck Captain Gelser all demonstrated extreme courage and bravery on that early March morning. Because of their quick and decisive actions, they were able to rescue three people from an incredibly dangerous situation – one that could easily have had a tragic outcome. Their selflessness for the betterment of the community makes them heroes among us,” said Senator Young.

“It was my honor to present these four heroic firefighters with their New York State Senate Liberty Medals earlier this year, and I was proud to share their accomplishments with the entire state. It takes a special dedication, a strong desire to help others and a tireless sense of community to forsake precious time with family and friends to rush to the aid of a neighbor in need at a moment’s notice. Fortunately, we are blessed with tremendous men and women like these four, who, when called to action, responded valiantly,” Senator Young said.

In the early morning hours of March 27, Chief Walker, First Assistant Chief Rawleigh, First Lieutenant Deiter and Truck Captain Steve Gelser arrived on the scene of a house fire. The men quickly discovered three residents had become trapped in the house as smoke was quickly engulfing the two-story structure.

The men first climbed a ladder and upon reaching the roof carried a terrified elderly woman to safety. Rawleigh and Deiter then quickly scaled the ladder again, to the then smoke-covered roof, where they rescued a second trapped woman as the home became engulfed in flames. The third resident, a man, was then rescued from the home's first floor.

Deiter and Rawleigh credited teamwork and the rigorous training put in by members of the fire department as contributing to their preparedness for the situation, as well as the keen guidance provided by Chief Walker and quick actions of Truck Captain Gelser.