



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Hero officer cops Liberty medal from Senator Murphy

TERRENCE MURPHY September 12, 2018

| ISSUE: **LOCAL HEROES, FIRST RESPONDERS, LIBERTY MEDAL, WESTCHESTER COUNTY, YORKTOWN POLICE**



Yorktown, NY - NYPD Police Officer James Talbert doesn't call himself a hero. Talbert, who pulled a woman and her beloved Yorkshire Terrier from her burning car, credits his instincts with inspiring him to act. But everyone else, particularly his proud family, was awed by his quick-thinking, selfless lifesaving act.

In July, while driving to his home in Mahopac from a friend's house, Officer Talbert saw a vehicle overturned and on fire on the Taconic Parkway. Punching out the sunroof, he pulled

a 59-year-old woman to safety. At the woman's request, he ran back to free her Yorkshire Terrier.

In recognition of his bravery, Senator Terrence Murphy presented Talbert with a New York State Liberty Medal at a ceremony held at the Yorktown Town Hall on September 12. The Liberty Medal is one of the highest civilian honors a New Yorker can receive.

"Presenting this award to Officer Talbert is one of those moments in politics that is a pleasure," said Senator Murphy. "He has one of the toughest jobs there is. He disregarded his own safety to help someone else. Even when he was off duty, he was still doing his job. What Officer Talbert did was literally save someone's life."

"I want to thank my fellow officers and family for their support," said Talbert. "I'm sure anyone who found themselves in the same position would do what I did. My training kicked in when I saw the overturned car. When I pulled the woman out, she was semi-conscious and startled, but was all right. She was yelling for 'her baby,' so I didn't hesitate to go back in and get her dog."



Assemblyman Kevin Byrne, a former volunteer firefighter and EMT for the Kent Volunteer Fire Department, spoke of the dangers associated with responding to an accident. "It can be very difficult and dangerous to deal with a car fire. The word 'hero' is often overused in politics. That's not the case with Officer Talbert. He's absolutely a hero."

Yorktown Town Councilman Ed Lachterman added, "When is Officer Talbert joining our department? Officer Talbert is the type of Police Officer that would make any Police Department proud. All joking aside, our Police Department is filled with great officers. Like Officer Talbert, they know how to respond to emergency situations."

Among the guests attending the ceremony were Talbert's fellow NYPD members including Sergeant Sergio De La Mota and Police Officers Ryan Sheehan, Amir Cepeda, Michael Derosa and Kevin Navarro. His proud family members and friends on hand included his parents, Tim and Robin, his brother, Jake, grandparents, Ginger and Bill, his uncle, Matt, his girlfriend Brittney Bennett, and his friend, Kim Bennett.

The New York State Liberty Medal is given to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers. Senator Murphy presented Lewisboro resident Riley DeJong with a Liberty Medal in May 2015 at his annual Women of Distinction Ceremony. Riley, a certified EMT was recognized for coming to the aid of injured passengers at the scene of the Metro North Train Crash in Valhalla on February 3, 2015. In July 2016, Michelle Margilaj, a bartender at Il Laghetto Restaurant in Mahopac, was awarded a Liberty Medal for rescuing an 8-year-old boy from drowning in Lake Mahopac. In December 2016, Senator Murphy presented then 19-year-old student, Cullen Malzo, with a Liberty Medal. Malzo had rescued two teenaged girls from an overturned car that had skidded into Lake Mahopac.