



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## **Sen. Helming: Wayne County Sheriff's Deputy is Officer of the Year Nominee**

Senator Pam Helming

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GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that Wayne County Sheriff’s Deputy Thomas Munzert is a nominee for the 2018 New York State Police Officer of the Year Award. On July 15, 2017, Deputy Munzert responded to a crash involving a car that was overturned on its roof in a pond. Without safety equipment, he entered the pond and pulled the driver to safety from the submerged vehicle. Earlier this year, Senator Helming presented Deputy Munzert with the New York State Senate Liberty Medal, the highest award the State Senate can bestow upon an individual.

“The Wayne County Sheriff’s Office mission statement reads in part that deputies are called upon ‘to anticipate and respond to events which threaten public order and the protection of life and property’ and to ‘act not for themselves, but for the good of the public.’ That sums up precisely and eloquently what Deputy Munzert did last year. He upheld these ideals to the highest degree. Deputy Munzert is truly a hero who demonstrates great courage and diligence not just in this moment but throughout his career. He continually devotes himself to public service and to the care and welfare of the citizens he is tasked with serving and protecting. When someone demonstrates the true meaning of being a hero – as Deputy Munzert did that day – they deserve commendation for their actions. That is why I consider it a privilege to honor Deputy Munzert for his courageous and meritorious actions with the Liberty Medal. It is equally a pleasure to announce him as a nominee for the New York State Police Officer of the Year Award,” Senator Helming said.

Wayne County Sheriff Barry Virts said, "Deputy Munzert's quick assessment of this serious incident and his immediate courageous action saved the life of the driver, who was still in the overturned vehicle. His action is a reflection of our deputy sheriffs' and all law enforcement's dedication to public safety."

Deputy Munzert is credited with saving the life of a woman whose vehicle plunged into a pond and overturned following a crash on Bloom Road in the Town Arcadia on Saturday, July 15, 2017. Due to Deputy Munzert's courageous, selfless actions, the victim of the car crash avoided serious injuries. Upon arrival to the scene, Deputy Munzert quickly jumped into the pond – without safety equipment and without regard for his own security – and pulled the victim from the overturned car as both water and smoke swiftly filled the upside-down vehicle.

The Police Officer of the Year Award recognizes a single police officer or team of officers for an exceptional act of valor symbolizing the service of police in New York State. The Liberty Medal is awarded to individuals who have earned special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers. Six members of the Yonkers Police Department earned this year's Police Officer of the Year Award and were honored for their actions on Sept. 25, 2017, when they apprehended a gunman who had shot one of them in the face at point-blank range. Deputy Munzert was one of 14 officers from seven other agencies who were nominated for the award, and he along with the other nominees will receive a Certificate of Exceptional Valor.