



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Skoufis

Skoufis Presents First Liberty Medals of Senate Term

JESSICA GULOTTA December 23, 2020

| ISSUE: **AWARDED LIBERTY MEDALS, NYS SENATE LIBERTY MEDAL, LIBERTY MEDAL, HEROISM**



Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) presented members of the Town of Marlborough Highway Department and Police Chief with the New York State Liberty Medal for their act of heroism in 2019. The Liberty Medal is the highest civilian honor that a resident can receive from New York State and is awarded to individuals for exceptional, heroic, life-saving acts. Liberty Medals require a months-long application process and must be approved by the Senate Majority Leader.

Police Chief Gerald Coccozza, Gary Lazaroff, Don Fredrick, Harry Freeborn, and Highway Superintendent John Alonge are the first Liberty Medal recipients of Senator Skoufis' time in the Legislature. Last July, a fuel truck got into an accident and completely overturned, blocking two lanes on Route 9W and trapping the truck driver. The truck contained fuel, making an explosion a very real possibility, especially as the tank began to leak. Without hesitation, Highway Superintendent John Alonge and employees Harry Freeborn and Don Fredrick sprang into action.

As Police Chief Gerald Coccozza came on the scene, the Highway Department used the front end loader to position Chief Coccozza to successfully extricate the trapped driver from the truck. Immediately, the men set to work dumping sand in order to create a dike and contain the leaking fuel.

"Thanks to the selfless, brave, and quick response of these individuals, a real catastrophe was averted," **said Senator Skoufis**. "I was honored to present these five men for their life-saving undertaking last year, and on behalf of the people I represent in Marlborough, I deeply thank them for their heroism. First responders are always the ones to arrive at these types of scenes and taking the time to acknowledge and support their work will always be a priority of mine."

Town of Marlborough Supervisor Al Lanzetta said, "When the need arose, the members of our Community didn't hesitate. The Town of Marlborough can rest secure knowing that people that make up our Highway Department, Police Department and our volunteer first responders, show the courage and ability we can count on. We are truly grateful for their service."

Please see the attached photos and video of the award presentation.

[Click here to view the video.](#)

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