



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anthony H. Palumbo

## Senators Palumbo & Weik Present Liberty Medals to Guillermo Sandoval and Frank “J.R.” Recupero for their Heroic and Courageous Actions on April 10, 2021

ANTHONY H. PALUMBO August 18, 2021

| ISSUE: **AWARDED LIBERTY MEDALS**



State Senators Alexis Weik (SD3) and Anthony Palumbo (SD1) jointly present Liberty Medal Awards to Guillermo Sandoval, a Marine Corps veteran and Frank “J.R.” Recupero, a retired New York City Police Officer who heroically helped save the life of Suffolk County Police Officer Christopher Racioppo.

On April 10, 2021, Officer Racioppo saw a driver, Jonathon Nunez, driving erratically on South Ocean Avenue in Patchogue. When Officer Racioppo sought to stop the vehicle, Mr. Nunez crashed his vehicle and then fled the scene. What ensued was a chase through Patchogue that ultimately led the suspect and Officer Racioppo to the front yard of Guillermo Sandoval's home. Both the suspect and the Officer were engaged in a physical confrontation.

Mr. Recuperero was driving home from dinner when he saw Mr. Nunez's vehicle driving erratically and eventually crashing. When he saw Officer Racioppo chasing Mr. Nunez, Mr. Recuperero stopped his car and ran to assist. Upon arriving on the scene, he helped to subdue and detain the suspect until additional help could arrive.

*"It is my distinct honor to present retired New York Police Department Officer Frank "J.R." Recuperero with New York State Senate's highest civilian award, the Liberty Medal, for his lifesaving and heroic actions taken on the night of April 10, 2021," said Senator Anthony Palumbo. "Through his quick and selfless acts, Mr. Recuperero helped save the life of Officer Christopher Racioppo and assisted in the apprehension of a violent and dangerous criminal. The men and women of law enforcement and the Suffolk County community are eternally grateful to Mr. Recuperero for his virtuous and selfless actions."*

Both Messrs. Sandoval and Recuperero overheard that Officer Racioppo said during the altercation with Mr. Nunez he had been stabbed. (It later turned out that Mr. Nunez stabbed Officer Racioppo with a knife seven centimeters into his leg, cutting an artery and a vein.) It was clear that Officer Racioppo was losing a considerable amount of blood, so thinking quickly, Mr. Sandoval supplied a belt to be used as a tourniquet for Officer Racioppo's leg. By all accounts, but for, the tourniquet being applied and the immediate care he received from first responders, Officer Racioppo would have likely lost his life.

*"The Liberty Medal is the highest honor an individual can receive in the State Senate. It goes to only the most select individuals who undertake the most heroic of acts. I can think of no finer example of that than with the quick-thinking actions Guillermo Sandoval took to help save Officer Racioppo's life," said Senator Alexis Weik.*

The Liberty Medal is the highest civilian honor issued by the State Senate. It is an award that must be approved by the Majority Leader and voted on by all Members of the Senate via Resolution. It is bestowed upon those individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers. For first responders, including law enforcement, it may only be awarded for going above and beyond or outside of the call of duty required for the particular job.