



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming and Assemblyman Gallahan Bill Naming 'Ralph Calabrese Memorial Highway' Signed Into Law

PAMELA HELMING November 14, 2022

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Legislation sponsored by Senator Pam Helming and Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan to name a portion of the state highway system after local veteran Ralph Calabrese has been signed into law. The bill (S.8085C/A.9046B) designates a portion of State Route 21 in Ontario County as "Ralph Calabrese Memorial Highway."

Senator Pam Helming said, “Mr. Calabrese was an American hero, a fierce advocate for his fellow veterans, and my good friend. Designating ‘Ralph Calabrese Memorial Highway’ is a symbol of our enduring gratitude and respect. Our community and state are indebted to Mr. Calabrese not only for his service in the Korean War, but for his leadership here at home to save the Canandaigua VA Medical Center and fight for the benefits and support every veteran deserves. Whether you saw him in a parade or at a Canandaigua Braves football game, Mr. Calabrese’s incomparable spirit was palpable and infectious.”

Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan said, “Ralph A. Calabrese was a man who loved his country and his community like no other. His dedicated service to our nation and efforts to support our veterans were truly laudable, and it is because of him the Canandaigua VA Medical Center has been able to continue their important work in support of our service members. I can think of few people from our community worthy of this recognition like Ralph, so I am grateful to see this bill signed into law to memorialize his legacy for future generations.”

Dominic Calabrese, Ralph Calabrese’s son, said, “As his son, I had firsthand knowledge of what a good and great man he was, especially where the veterans were concerned. He would be so proud, as am I, that you feel such respect for him. This is an honor that will keep his legacy alive in everyone that passes through that corridor of Route 21. Thank you again for remembering my dad with this great sign of respect and gratitude for all that he did.”

The “Ralph Calabrese Memorial Highway” begins on Route 21 at E. Gibson and N. Main Streets in Canandaigua and ends at Route 488 in the Town of Hopewell.

Ralph is widely credited for saving the Canandaigua VA Medical Center when the federal government recommended closing the facility decades ago. He launched an extensive grassroots campaign – organizing community rallies, collecting thousands of letters of support, speaking at hearings, and battling Washington.

Ralph dedicated his life to advocating for his fellow veterans and his community. A U.S. Army veteran of the Korean War, he was inducted to the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame in 2012.

Ralph passed away on December 5, 2021 at the Canandaigua VA. Upon his passing, Senator Helming wrote a column honoring him and remembering their friendship.