

**" Standing Fast." Retired But Still The Bravest.....the Gene O'Kane  
Division of FDNY Retired celebrates 45 years!**

**Age is just a Number...we've never looked better. Come and join us.**

**Membership application is available on our website  
[www.okanefdnyretirees.com](http://www.okanefdnyretirees.com), and in this newsletter.**

**WELCOME** to  
"Standing Fast." The  
official newsletter of the  
Gene O'Kane Division of  
FDNY Retired, the first  
and oldest FDNY retirees  
organization in the U.S.  
We have been chartered  
in the state of Florida  
since 1979.  
Postal Address: FDNY  
Retired, 2053 Blue Beech  
Ct., Trinity, FL 34655



[okaneclubfdny@icloud.com](mailto:okaneclubfdny@icloud.com)  
email us for more info.



## Who Are We?

We are an organization of retired New York City Firefighters living on the west coast of Florida in the areas of Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Pinellas, Hillsborough counties.

Although now retired, we share the bond of having had the privilege of protecting lives and property of the residents of the City of New York as members of the greatest fire department in the world, the FDNY. As retirees of the FDNY, in 1978 we banded together to form the first chapter of the FDNY RETIRED, received a charter from the state of Florida and named our organization after our founder, Gene O'Kane. Thus we are "THE GENE O'KANE DIVISION OF FDNY RETIRED." Our division is the oldest of all the divisions of FDNY Retired, one of nine divisions located in Florida and one of twenty six divisions scattered across the United States. We are also a member of the the "URFA, the United Retired Firefighters Assn. We welcome all FDNY retirees, of all ranks, retired volunteer firefighters from all other municipalities and non-firefighters to join us in friendship and brotherhood as members of our proud organization.

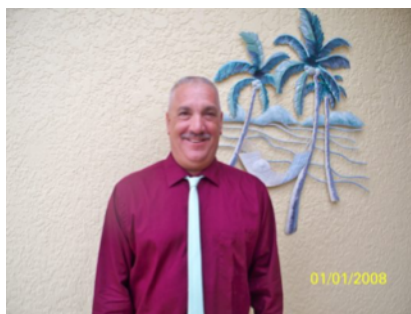
*Membership and Meetings:* Membership in the Gene O'Kane Division of FDNY Retired is open to all FDNY retirees of all ranks, paid and volunteer firefighters from all cities across the U.S.A., also non-firefighters are accepted as "Associate Members." Applications for membership can be obtained by completing the application located in this newsletter and mailing it in as directed. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of June, July and August, at 7 p.m. at the America Legion "Paradise Post" located on Veterans Drive in New Port Richey, FL 34654.

**NEXT MEETING: 9/16/25, 7pm. American  
Legion Paradise Post, New Port Richey, FL**

## 2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD



KEVIN DOHERTY, PRESIDENT  
727-744-5748



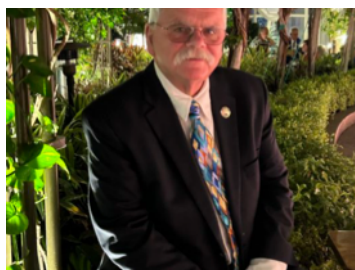
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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT - JULY 2025**  
**WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY**  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025**

Dear Members,

Hello to all our members, family and friends. We are officially in our club's summer vacation. I hope you all have great plans for the days ahead. To our snowbirds, enjoy your northern change of pace. To our steadfast Floridians, check on your air conditioners and hurricane kits!

I am happy to say that all is going smoothly with our club. We had a great year with some memorable events, parties and picnics. It looks like everyone is all paid up on their dues which is great. We could use a little more help with our Boosters though. Remember that anyone can purchase a Booster and have their special message listed along with their name in our monthly newsletter's Booster Page. Every little bit helps us add to our operating funds. Give it some thought and give us a boost!

In closing, let's hope things stay nice and calm during our break. To those recovering from illness or surgeries, we wish you well and will keep you in our prayers. Wherever you are this summer, stay safe and be well.

**Best Regards,**

**Kevin Doherty, President**

## **ARE YOU AN O'KANE BOOSTER? NO? READ BELOW** **TO LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT. YOUR CLUB.**

Included in every issue of our newsletter is a listing of O'Kane Boosters. These simple messages are our way of remembering and honoring those who have passed. Each Booster costs just \$5.00 and helps with the club's operating expenses. Anyone may buy a Booster, you don't have to be a member. Family, Friends, Associate Members - are all welcome to contribute. The Booster runs for 1 full year.

As you read the list of Boosters on the following page, you'll see that many will be expiring soon. Please send in your new or renewable Boosters so that we can continue to support the memories of those you wish to honor.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** While we are on our summer break, please send your Booster checks and messages to:  
LOUIS KIKIS, TREASURER  
4973 W. Breeze Circle  
Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Make checks payable to: O'Kane FDNY Retired

### **Sample Booster Submission:**

**Your name: John Doe**

**Your address: 1234 Happy Lane, Hideaway, FL 12345**

**Your phone: 727-111-1111**

**Your Booster Messages (Samples, you create your own)**

**9/11 Never Forget**

**343 Rest In Peace**

**Honoring all who gave all**

**TOTAL # BOOSTERS: 3**

**TOTAL \$ ENCLOSED: \$15.00 (\$5/PER MESSAGE)**

**OKANE BOOSTERS: reminder...if your number is a 6 it's time to renew!** **\*Indicates booster renewed.**

Send your Booster request to: Louis Kikis, Treasurer, 4973 W Breeze Circle, Palm Harbor, FL 34683. Boosters run for 12 months. The number following your name indicates when your Booster will expire. Thank you for your support. (Rev. 6/25)

Chichester, Dan6 FF Martin Chichester E303/LT Dan Chichester E234, L126, E275/FF Arthur Chichester, L 127/LT Mike Chichester E204/FF Walter Strockbine E204 Dunscomb Jim6 Engine 82

\*Kikis Louis1 E22/ L13 "The Yorkville Nine"

\*Kikis Louis1 343 Never Forget

\*Kikis, Victoria6 Honoring the memory of those who gave their all. 343 Never forget.

\*Kikis, Victoria6 RIP Jeff Giordano - 9/11/01

McCarthy William11 Members of L25, 9/11 Never Forget

McVeigh Thomas6 All members of Engine44 91

\*Martinsen Ron1 Mem BC Tom Neary L134

\*Martinsen Ron1 Mem BC Chris Scalone E332

\*Miccio, Rich6 Tom Gambino L163 - 9/11/01 - RIP

\*Miccio, Rich6 L163/E325 - Woodside Warriors

\*Nilsson Mike1 E303

\*Nilsson Mike1 L 126

\*Nilsson Mike1 deceased 343

Savarese Jim11 The Tin House Gang E-232/L176 BMA

Savarese Jim11 Watkins St. E-231/L-120/44BN

Savarese Jim11 Briggs Ave E79/L37/27BN

Savarese Jim11 RIP Ron Quartuccio

\*Tarantino Ron1 Mem Lou Tarantino

\*Tarantino Ron1 Detective Sergeant James Van Valen

\*Tarantino Ron1 Nick Barone



## NYC JOINS TO MOURN "TOP COP"



On Friday, June 6, 2025, Bernard Kerik, the former NYPD commissioner who led New York City's police force through the 9/11 terror attacks and earned the nickname "America's Cop," was remembered during a funeral service. The service, held at St. Patrick's Cathedral, was attended by thousands of mourners. In attendance were former NYC Mayor Giuliani, current NYC Mayor Adams, and NYC Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch.

He was eulogized by his son, Joey Kerik, as a steadfast family man even during his high-profile career leading the City's policy force. "He always told me how proud he was of me. The one thing I never got to say to him was how proud I was of him."

A procession to the cathedral before the ceremony included motorcycles, a marching band, and hundreds of NYPD officers. Former Commissioner Kerik is survived by his wife, Hala Matli Kerik, and their two daughters, Celine and Angelina. He is also survived by his son, Joseph Kerik, from a previous marriage to Jacqueline Llerena.

## BIG APPLE BITS....SOME LIGHT SUMMER TREATS

### LOOK WHO'S TAWKIN!

New Yorkers have received another dubious honor...that of the BEST ACCENT! In a recent Daily News column, it was reported that New York City boasts the most confident sounding accent in the U.S.A. Think of some great lines from films like Midnight Cowboy (I'm Wawkin here!), My Cousin Vinny's (Two Youts) and Marissa Tomei's "How's ya Chinese Food?" and so many others. Brooklyn Born stand-up comedienne Elyse DeLucci says, "New Yorkers, we speak almost from our diaphragm. It's very confident sounding. Delucci hosts a podcast called "New York Talk."



The study, taken by Answering Service Care picked the brains of more than 2,000 Americans for the study. While New Yorkers got the most confident accent, The Southerners were rated most charming due to their slower pace of speaking. Also receiving recognition was the Aloha State, Hawaii whose accent was found to most relaxing and welcoming.

### **IT'S BAAAACK.....FDNY Calendar returns after a 4-year hiatus.**

After a four-year hiatus, the FDNY and the FDNY Foundation launched the 2026 Calendar of Heroes on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at a kickoff event at One Vanderbilt in Manhattan. The iconic calendar, in partnership with Firehouse Subs, showcases some of the FDNY's bravest and most dedicated first responders. This year, 25 firefighters, EMTs and paramedics are included in the calendar, which is back for the first time since 2021. Proceeds from the calendar directly support the FDNY Foundation's lifesaving mission to enhance fire and life safety education, training initiatives and resources for the FDNY.

A \$25 donation to the FDNY Foundation secures your copy of the 2026 Calendar of Heroes. It is **[available now at FDNYShop.com](https://www.fdnys.com/Shop)**.

## ALLIGATOR ALCATRAZ A FLORIDA REALITY

This is most certainly not your ticket to paradise. The State of Florida has begun construction on a temporary immigrant detention center in the Everglades. Bring on another Alcatraz...this one has no threat of violent currents, ravenous sharks or hazardous rocky outcroppings to thwart off ideas of escape. Here in beautiful, tropical Florida we offer a stay on a deserted airfield nestled amongst marshy reeds harboring stealthy pythons, alligators and heat, heat, heat.

The new center, which according to authorities will have the capacity to accommodate around 1,000 detainees and will begin operations in July or August. Worried about high walls and barricades to keep the detainees detained? "You don't need to invest that much in the perimeter. If people get out, there's not much waiting for them other than alligators and pythons," explains the state's attorney general, James Uthmeier. The facility will be funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is responsible for disaster co-ordination.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced Friday, 6/27/25, that the detention center located deep in the Everglades will begin housing detainees as early as Tuesday. Nicknamed "Alligator Alcatraz," the controversial facility is already under construction on the site of a nearly-abandoned Miami-Dade County airport. Speaking on Fox News Friday morning, DeSantis said the center will be able to process more than 3,000 undocumented immigrants at a time.







We are very proud to have our club take part in commemorative services and memorials throughout the Tampa Bay Area. Many of our members serve on planning committees and take active parts in area ceremonies, including speaking about their experiences, displaying periodicals, artifacts, and videos. Our members are active volunteers for area organizations including Tunnel 2 Towers, Fire and Ice, and more. Please make note of these upcoming events. Share the information with your family and friends. Step up to ensure that we NEVER FORGET.

Calendar of upcoming events honoring September 11, 2001

(Please note that we will be providing specific details about these events as they become available.)

**September 8, 2025 St. Leo University** 33701 State Road 52, St Leo, FL 33574

This is an event sponsored by Tunnel 2 Towers. Time and agenda will be posted as the information becomes available to us. Tentative start time is 10:00 a.m.

**September 10, 2025 George Steinbrenner Field** 1 Steinbrenner Field, Tampa, FL 33614

Annual Wreath laying ceremony at the 9/11 Memorial. The O'Kane Club had an integral part in the creation of this monument donating a piece of a beam from Ground Zero. Event begins at 10a.m. Service is brief (in keeping in mind the heat of the day). Water is provided and restrooms area available.

**September 11, 2025 Curlew Hills Memorial Service** 1750 Curlew Rd., Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Annual Memorial Service. Our members sponsor the essay contest for middle school students, as well as having several members serving on the planning board. Members participate in the event and our club has an extensive display of articles and artifacts available for viewing before, during, and after the ceremony. Ceremony begins promptly at 10:00am. Water and restrooms are available.

**September 11, 2025 Annual Memorial Service** Sims Park, 6341 Bank St., New Port Richey, FL 34652

The longest running memorial honoring September 11th in the Tampa Bay area. Ceremony begins in the evening at 5pm. Our club members serve on the planning committee and have displays and a video running throughout the event. Water and restrooms are available.

## **FDNY - CAPTAIN VERNON A. RICHARD HIGH SCHOOL INSPIRES GRADUATE**

At the FDNY-Captain Vernon A. Richard High School in Brooklyn, NY, students are taught a specialized curriculum focused on preparing them for careers in emergency response, particularly in fire and medical services. This past week saw 87 young men and women attended their graduation ceremony at the FDNY Fire Academy on Randalls Island. Among the students was Desiree Ruiz.

Desiree is 17 years old. Her path to FDNY High School was paved for her when her dad suddenly collapsed from a cardiac arrest back in 2023. A friend (who happened to be a senior at the high school) had stopped by on an errand, and saw what was happening. He immediately began giving him chest compressions, helping to save her father's life.

From that day on Desiree was determined to attend the FDNY High School. She and the other 86 graduates of the Class of 2025 have bright futures ahead.

If you want to learn more about about the school, visit their website at: [schools.nyc.gov](https://schools.nyc.gov).



The FDNY-Captain Vernon A. Richard High School - providing promising futures for New York City's youth.

The FDNY - Captain Vernon A. Richard High School is named honoring Captain Richard and in memory of him and all the others who perished in the terror attacks on 9/11/2001. Read more about Captain Richard in the following page.

## Captain Vernon A. Richard...A Gentle Giant, One of the 343



On the morning of September 11, 2001, Lieutenant Vernon A. Richard responded to the call along with 5 other members of his company, Tower Ladder 7 on Manhattan's East Side. Like most all responders that day, he was unaware of the terrorist attack being carried out. Like all those responding that day, he gave no thought to himself, he and his company did what they lived for, what they were trained for.

Richard was well liked among his fellow firefighters. Known as a gentle giant, he was focused on family and fitness. He participated in several marathon races and was a member of the NY Road Runners Club. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Richard who says of him, "His life was a tribute to humanity; he let his good works speak for him. Vernon believed his family to be his foundation."

Vernon A. Richard was promoted to Captain posthumously. He, along with his company, perished on September 11th, 2001.



In 2018, New York City paid tribute to Captain Richard by creating and naming a high school after him. The FDNY - Captain Vernon A. Richard School is a unique center of education geared to preparing youths for careers as EMT's and firefighters. The 2025 class of 87 seniors were graduated in June.



Captain Richard's wife, Dorothy, pictured above at the high school's dedication.