

9-11 hero is laid to rest

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Anthony Tanagretta presented helmet.



Posted Wednesday, October 2, 2019 2:19 pm

By Sharon MacGregor

The Fire Department of New York motto is, "New York's Bravest." Richard "Ricky" Tanagretta was indeed brave; as a 9/11 First Responder, 26 year member of the FDNY, past Chief and 27 year member of the Pine Bush Volunteer Fire Department, instructor at the New York State as well as Orange County Fire Academies, through repeated battles with cancer and during his recovery from a traumatic injury following a motorcycle accident which resulted in the loss of one of his legs.

Tanagretta passed away as a result of 9/11 related cancer on September 24 and his life was commemorated in mass on Monday, September 30 at the Infant Savoir Catholic Church in Pine Bush with a repast at the Pine Bush Volunteer Firehouse. Those who knew him well shared insight and stories about the man simply known as Ricky.

One point that was very much driven home during the three eulogies was Tanagretta was simply born to teach. He was remembered not only for teaching at the fire academies, in addition, Sergeant James Johnson recalled in his eulogy that among Tanagretta's community volunteer experiences, he also assisted with the Pine Bush Leadership and Law Academy. Sgt. Johnson closed his tribute by saying, "The honor of service is not the service to the community itself. It is the honor to serve with great men and women. He was my friend. He was my brother."

Tanagretta and his wife of 38 years, Doreen, have four children; Anthony, Michael, Lisa and Christina as well as four grandchildren. Anthony Tanagretta was presented with a helmet from the FDNY at the conclusion of the funeral mass.

The funeral procession included FDNY Rescue 5, Town of Crawford Police, the FDNY ceremonial unit, Pine Bush Hook and Ladder Co. No.1, law enforcement motorcycles and the FDNY Fire Riders.

"Losing him (Tanagretta) is a great loss to the fire company and the community," said Pine Bush Fire Chief Michael Mataraza. He was strong willed, full of knowledge, always willing to help teach younger or old members new tricks. He was innovative and always wanted to better the fire company, whether volunteer or paid, because all firefighters are brothers, no matter what."

At the Pine Bush Firehouse, Anthony Tanagretta said, "On behalf of my entire family, I would like to say we very much appreciate everything everyone has done. We couldn't ask for a greater show of respect for my father and the outpouring from the community and everyone that knew him, really makes us feel loved. He probably would've thought this was too much," he laughed, "But it was warranted and deserved. He was a hero and a wonderful teacher."