

# ORANGE FIRE HEADQUARTERS RENAMED FOR MARTY DEMARZO

**BY WALTER ELLIOTT**

**ORANGE** - Members of the Orange Fire Department - before 200 of their city and neighboring towns' colleagues, Martin P. DeMarzo's family members, governmental dignitaries and residents - dedicated their fire headquarters in the late chief's honor June 25.

Three OFD officers unveiled the "Chief Martin P. DeMarzo Fire Headquarters" lettering at 319 Central Ave. at 1:01 p.m. The officers, serenaded two Essex County Pipe and Drum Corps musicians' rendition of "America the Beautiful," then unveiled a photo plaque featuring the chief's face and his commitment to Orange and his firefighters.

It took a moment for the resulting applause from some 120 civilians to fade. The 80 firefighters and other first responders from nine departments - almost all in their uniform dress blues - waited as long to end their saluting.

The unveiling ended an hour-long ceremony rededicating the 93-year-old fire headquarters in DeMarzo's memory. Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr. and OFD Deputy Chief James Fonzino had tried to keep the ceremony short given the 95-degree heat that all were enduring at Central and Lincoln avenues.

An hour's wait for a moment's



*Mayor Hawkins surrounded by Orange Firefighters in front of headquarters*

dedication, however, was for a permanent memorial to the 51-year-old chief.

"From now on, 419 Central Ave. is known as the DeMarzo Fire Headquarters," said Hawkins. "It will be the DeMarzo Headquarters forever."

Fonzino and Hawkins then invited the gathering into the northwestern firehouse for a two-hour reception. The occasion

allowed people to recall their "Marty stories" - legends that will be retold at least until the last living associate of the chief dies.

Those stories remembered DeMarzo as a boy and young man growing up in Orange, his joining the city's bravest in 1980, and his rise through the ranks to chief in 1999. *( cont. on page 3 )*

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DeMarzo, after devoting most of his life and career to the City of Orange Township, died from hernia surgery complications at Morristown Memorial Hospital June 7, 2009. His sudden and unexpected death sent Orange and those who knew DeMarzo into mourning.



Mrs. Demarzo speaks, with Mayor Hawkins to her left and Marty Demarzo's brother standing behind her

Hawkins would later name older brother Benjamin DeMarzo Acting Orange Fire Chief. The rededication and anniversary of Marty DeMarzo's death prompted several mourners to add their recollections to the



Demarzo Plaque at firehouse

chief's 86-signature Legacy.com guest book. Martin P. DeMarzo was born in Orange Memorial Hospital May 4, 1958. The family, who lived along Park Avenue at the time, saw Marty attend Our Lady of Mount Carmel Elementary and Our Lady of the Valley High schools. Both Roman Catholic schools are closed although the Orange Public Schools were permitted to use Mt. Carmel classrooms while its own Park Avenue Elementary School was being renovated and expanded for two years.

"On my first day in school, I remember getting up early and running to Mt. Carmel," said Firefighter Edward Vega. "I got to the front door -and there was this kid all ready there. I thought to myself at

the end of the line, 'I got to watch him.' "

Vega, DeMarzo, OFD Capt. Robert Manganelli and Mike Mariano became the local "Four Musketeers." They and classmate James Corvino went to their schools together. DeMarzo himself became a noted Valley High track and wrestling team member.

The Valley Class of 1976 graduate, in one Legacy.com entry, attended Arcadia University in Nova Scotia. DeMarzo would make two more college tries before joining Orange's bravest June 6, 1980.

DeMarzo apparently found himself well-suited to firefighting in and around Orange. He was promoted to captain, fire inspector and Orange's Emergency management Coordinator prior to being appointed chief. DeMarzo, at different times, was also president of Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association Locals 10 and 210, representing Orange's firefighters.

On his appointment of chief, DeMarzo found himself dealing with more than the increasing and more diverse demands placed upon a small urban fire department. The chief also had to deal with funding and human resource issues his squad and the city government encountered.

Contemporaries saw more than a thoroughly professional firefighter in DeMarzo. They recalled how he applied school day values to his job and to other people. They saw how well-versed DeMarzo was in Orange's residents and background although he and wife Dianne had moved to Livingston in 1989.

"I remembered receiving a call while on desk duty from a city senior citizen who said she was unable to get out of her house," recalled Vega. "Chief DeMarzo saw my long face while taking the call and asked what was wrong. I told him and he said, 'Let's go.' "

Vega said that he and DeMarzo went to the woman's house. The chief greeted her by saying, "Oh, you're so-and-so's mother," and gave her a ride to her appointment.

DeMarzo also left behind brother Eugene and four sons among his survivors. Dianne DeMarzo, who received a plaque and a photo montage of her husband, and four relatives stood from the front row when asked by Hawkins.

The family gathering also included Lazarus DeMarzo - a five-year-old Dalmatian.

At least two photographs of Chief DeMarzo grace Orange City Hall. Firefighters, however, were looking for a

more lasting tribute when they came upon renaming their fire headquarters.

The 1917 building, however, would be more than get a plaque and lettering. The two-story concrete and brick structure at Central and Lincoln's northwest corner would receive new flagpoles, doors and lighting, renewed woodwork, a fresh coat of paint



Name of firehouse

and a cleaning.

"We got together last year and came up with the rededication," said Fonzino. "Our memorial committee approached the mayor and council about renaming the headquarters - which they unanimously did Jan. 19. Now we had to tell the government not to worry about raising the money." The committee held a "Marty Gras" party May 20 at West Orange's Mayfair Farms as a fundraiser. There were also several private donations.

**MAIN STREET**

**ORANGE**

**SIDEWALK SALE**

**THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY**

**JULY 1—2—3**

**Raindate: Sat., July 10**

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