

PCNY 2014 Life Saving Award presented to Nassau County Det. John McGee

On Sunday April 24, 2014 at about 07:30 hours Detective John McGee was off duty and on his way home from a night tour driving his personal vehicle northbound on Mineola Blvd. in Willston Park. He was about three blocks south of the Third Precinct Station House when he observed a smoke condition at the home of 433 Mineola Blvd. Det. McGee continued northbound and, observing flames exiting the front of a home, called 911 from his cell phone, then parked and exited his vehicle. Det. McGee wanted to protect life and property if possible. Based upon the time of day, it was highly probable that the residence was occupied. He approached the front door and, looking through a window, determined that the fire was too intense to gain entry via the front door. Burning parts of the first-floor ceiling had begun to drop to the floor. Det. McGee screamed out to an unidentified male walking on the sidewalk and requested that the person get help. Raymond Ruldoph (69 years old) came of his residence at 437 Mineola Blvd after hearing Det. McGee screaming "FIRE." Mr. Ruldoph advised Det. McGee that the homeowner lived alone and usually slept in the rear first-floor den. Mr. Ruldoph left to retrieve an ax from his shed to assist with an entry in the home.

Det., McGee went to the rear door and found it locked, but the door inside was open. He observed a disoriented victim lying on the floor about three or four feet into the room. The back den was involved with fire and embers were falling everywhere. Det. McGee called out to the victim to crawl to the door, but the victim was unable to move. He realized that he had to enter the burning room and pull the victim to safety. Det. McGee recognized that he had to put his own life in danger to save the victim's life. So he kicked and pulled at the screen door and was able to gain entry into the burning room with embers falling everywhere and grabbed the victim. The victim stated there were "four more." Det. McGee now believed there were four additional people in the home. The victim indicated that four more people were in the next room. Det. McGee then pulled the victim out of the home onto the stoop. Mr. Ruldoph and Fred Ricci of 411 Mineola Blvd. assisted the victim to his feet. The three walked off to safety. The

victim would have died if Det. McGee did not come to his rescue.

Det. McGee made an attempt to re-enter the home to search for more victims, but he heat, smoke and flames were too intense. He was only able to stop a few feet into the dwelling before having to retreat due to the intensity of the heat and flames. He then used a garden hose to try to reduce the fire load into the den area without success. Patrol arrived on scene and assisted Det. McGee with the attempts to locate additional victims. Officers went to all first-floor windows to search for any additional victims inside the inferno. This residential house fire required four fire departments, 100 firefighters and 10 apparatus to extinguish the fire. The cause of the fire is unknown. Investigation revealed the victim lived alone and was



overcome by smoke inhalation, which caused him to be disoriented. Investigation revealed that the victim's statement of "four more" in the next room was unfounded.

Det. McGee is a twenty-eight year veteran of the Nassau County Police Department. His quick and decisive actions undoubtedly lead to the victim's narrow escape from this fire. Det. McGee recognized the immediate life threat to the victim and to himself. He also intelligently evaluated the level of fire and the estimated time of arrival of the fire department or any other assistance. Det. McGee knew that the victim needed to be removed from the home immediately if the victim was to survive. He displayed courage and placed himself at risk of serious physical injury and/or death to save another human life. Det. McGee's successful rescue of the victim caused him to suffer neck, shoulder and back pain as well as smoke inhalation. Det. McGee received medical treatment at Winthrop University Hospital for a sprained back and smoke inhalation and was released. As a result of his injuries, Det. McGee was out sick for eight tours of duty. We award the 2014 Police Conference of New York Life Saving Award to Det. John McGee of the Nassau County Police Department for the demonstrated life-saving skills shown by this officer.

