



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1159-2003, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1159

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to posthumously bestow the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon Father Mychal Judge.

By The Speaker (Council Member Miller) and Council Members Fidler, Foster, Gennaro, Gerson, Liu, McMahon, Nelson, Perkins, Recchia, Rivera, Sanders, Seabrook, Sears, Serrano, Weprin, Brewer, Felder, Comrie, Quinn and Lanza

Whereas, The Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, recognizes exceptional meritorious service; and

Whereas, In 1945, President Harry S. Truman established the Medal of Freedom to honor the contributions of American civilians in World War II; and

Whereas, The Presidential Medal of Freedom was reintroduced in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy to honor individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors; and

Whereas, Father Mychal Judge was one such individual: a man of deep religious conviction, Father Judge distinguished himself as a broad-minded, tolerant spirit, an individual who understood the complexities of the human condition and strove to help others achieve balance in their lives; and

Whereas Moral dignity and a profound compassion for his fellow human beings were just two of the many qualities that made Father Mychal Judge beloved and admired by all those fortunate enough to know him; and

Whereas, Born Emmet Judge in Brooklyn, New York on May 11, 1933, Mychal Judge always wanted to be a priest. He was an altar boy in elementary school and joined the Franciscan friars when he was just 15. He took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in 1955, and was ordained in 1961; and

Whereas, Father Judge reached into his own experience of suffering and told people, "When tragedies strike us at any early age, maybe religion takes on a greater meaning. The closer the tragedy is to our heart and home, the more likely faith is to form, because we've been tested and tried, and from that comes faith"; and

Whereas, Father Judge's ability to minister to those in need was extraordinary and truly selfless. He was always ready to extend himself in service, and the relationships he built as a priest were as enduring as they were instructive; and

Whereas, In 1986, shortly after Father Judge was assigned to the friary at St. Francis of Assisi Church on West 31st Street in Manhattan, he was called to Bellevue Hospital to say Mass for Steven McDonald, a New York City police officer paralyzed from the neck down after being shot by a 15-year-old he was questioning in Central Park; and

Whereas, In the days and years following the shooting, Father Judge became extremely close to Steven McDonald, and traveled with him, his wife Patti Ann, and their son Conor to speaking engagements in the United States and Northern Ireland; and

Whereas, Father Mychal became the personal pastor to many families of victims of the TWA Flight 800 disaster off Long Island, regardless of their religious affiliation. He spent weeks at a Ramada Inn hotel that became base of operations for the families, and he remained involved in some of their lives until his untimely passing; and

Whereas, Father Mychal Judge became an American hero when, during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he died while ministering to the people of New York and the Firefighters that he dearly loved; and

Whereas, Father Mychal was a man who offered spiritual uplift and moral compass to all. Through selfless acts of kindness and of love, he earned the respect and admiration of so many, especially our City's Firefighters, and right up until the end of his own life, he was a stable, guiding and inspirational force to countless others; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon United States Congress to posthumously bestow the Presidential Medal of Freedom upon Father Mychal Judge.

WA
LS#3539
11/14/03