

His attitude and work ethic led to his being awarded the Bridgeport Fire Department's third highest honor in 2000, the Medal of Merit.

But awards and accolades were not why Lieutenant Velasquez became a firefighter. In fact, he never displayed the many citations he had received throughout his career on his uniform. He also turned down a job with the New York City Fire Department.

The reason being?—Bridgeport has more fires.

For Lieutenant Velasquez, and firefighters all over our Nation, the call to serve means facing danger every day. The commotion of an emergency becomes secondary to the need to help people, and the dangers they personally face must take a backseat to the task at hand.

That was the case on the afternoon of July 24, 2010, when Lieutenant Velasquez and his colleague, Michel Baik, were conducting a search-and-rescue mission on the third floor of a burning house in Bridgeport. They were deep into the blaze, looking for anyone who may need help, and trying to ventilate the structure.

None of the inhabitants of the home were injured. But tragically, both of these courageous men lost their lives, despite the quick action of their colleagues to pull them out of danger and get them to the hospital.

Tragedies are inherent in this profession, and the risks are shared by every single person who has ever gotten the call, rushed to their gear, and has run headlong into danger in order to save the life of someone else. These shared risks help to bind those called to take them together in a solemn way.

Firefighters will do anything for one another, both on the job, and when the worst happens. The more than 7,000 of their fellow firefighters—from as far away as western Canada—who attended the memorial services for Steven Velasquez and Michel Baik were an impressive testament to that bond.

I believe that the eulogy offered in tribute to Lieutenant Velasquez by International Association of Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger at his memorial service speaks well of this solemn commitment. Through these difficult times, the community which Steven served, and those he served with, can provide support and comfort to his loved ones.

Of course, no tribute will ever be enough to ease the suffering of their families. I offer my deepest condolences to Lieutenant Velasquez's wife Marianne, his son Aaron, his daughter Salina, and to his entire family. Their sacrifice is unimaginable, and they will always be in our thoughts and prayers.

I know that we can never make this right for them. But we must celebrate the life and service of Lieutenant Velasquez and make sure that his memory—as a role model and true hero—live on and help to inspire others to take up the call to serve.

I ask to have printed in the RECORD President Schaitberger's words to which I referred.

The material follows:

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

President Harold Schaitberger

EULOGY FOR LT. STEVEN VELASQUEZ, BRIDGEPORT LOCAL 834, FRIDAY, JULY 30, 2010

Lieutenant and IAFF Local 834 member Steven Velasquez—just 40 years on this Earth—was taken too soon.

To Steven's mother, Carol, thank you for giving me the honor of being here today to celebrate your son's life.

To his bride Marianne, his son Aaron and his daughter Salina, to his sister Cindy and his brother Jason, to his family and friends, to his brothers and sisters in the Bridgeport Fire Department, and to his extended fire fighter family, I have traveled here today to make sure you know that the thoughts and prayers of our General Secretary-Treasurer, our entire International Executive Board, and the more than 298,000 members of the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Bravest in North America, are with you today.

I know that my words won't make you forget your pain or forget your loss.

But I hope I can help you understand that to those of us who have come from cities and towns across two great countries—"Stevie V." was family to us.

Even though many of us didn't have the privilege of knowing Stevie personally, we know who he was.

We know him because there is so much about those who enter this profession of ours that are so similar.

A quiet courage, humble, understated—never wanting to bring attention to themselves or their work.

Their willingness to serve a community and a public and their readiness to sacrifice—that's how we know who "Stevie V." was.

Everyone who goes on what we call "The Job" becomes part of this extended family.

We all know what this career can demand and we all know how cruel the consequences can be.

Everyone who has taken the oath to serve in our profession comes into it knowing the risk, and being here today reaffirms just how dangerous this job is.

We know when we get into this calling that it could take any one of us at any time.

It can take us after 30 years on the job or after 30 days.

That's why we are one big family—no matter where we really call home—because everyone here knows just how rewarding—and yet how brutal, this job is.

And even while we know the consequences nothing prepares us to cope with the grief that we feel when we lose a brother or a sister in the line of duty—let alone two.

Many of us are together for the first time today.

We will come together again this afternoon to honor Mitch Baik.

We will come together and we will be there for each other because no one in our fire service family should ever have to go through this alone.

And no family member of a fallen fire fighter should ever have to go through this alone.

But Mitch's loss and Stevie's loss will not prevent us from celebrating their lives today.

It will not prevent us from celebrating their service to their community today.

It will not prevent me from saying that my heart is broken that they are gone but we were blessed to have them in our lives.

Stevie Velasquez was both a young man and a grizzled veteran.

At just 40 years of age he already had two decades in the fire station.

He already was wise beyond his years.

For 20 years in two departments Stevie demonstrated his work ethic and set an example for others to follow.

That's why he received the Medal of Merit—the department's third-highest award—in 2000.

That's why he made lieutenant five months ago.

Bursting at the seams with enthusiasm ready to hop on a rig and respond to any call afraid of nothing, eager to experience everything, and ready to give everything he had to do The Job.

He had an efficient, studious approach.

He understood the importance of training and the importance of being prepared.

Committed, duty bound, ready to serve in the hardest, most rewarding job imaginable—that's who Stevie was.

Ready to rush to the aid of strangers, no questions asked—that's who he was.

Ready to protect his community, ready to comfort those in need, ready to lead people to safety who couldn't find their way out—that's who he was.

A devoted family man standing vigil over his newborn daughter's bedside while she gained the strength she needed to persevere—that's who he was.

He protected his community and his family—that's who "Stevie V." he was.

Like many of us he probably considered himself lucky to be a fire fighter, lucky to be able to answer the call, lucky to do something he loved.

But we were the lucky ones.

The Bridgeport Fire Department, Local 834, the IAFF—we were the lucky ones.

His brothers and sisters in Prince George's County Maryland where Stevie started his career in the fire service—they were the lucky ones.

His wife, his children, his parents, his brother and sister—you were the lucky ones.

That's what I would tell him if he were standing here today.

We had quite a gift in Lieutenant Steven Velasquez.

And that's why we feel cheated that we have to give him back to the Lord so soon.

But we will not forget him.

How could we?

A young gun . . . a rising star.

A shining example of courage, of professionalism.

Stevie's name will be etched in our Wall of Honor in Colorado Springs.

His name will remain there forever, engraved in that beautiful granite wall—to be honored every year as part of our Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial service.

To Stevie's family, we want you to know that you aren't alone.

You should know that long after the last word of the last eulogy, the IAFF and Local 834 will be here for you. Today, tomorrow, and for years to come.

To Lieutenant Steven Velasquez, who gave his life so others could live, from your 298,000 brothers and sisters in the IAFF—thank you for the gift of your life. May you rest in peace. God bless you and may God bless the fire fighters on the front lines everywhere.●

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN M. SIMPSON

● Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, today I thank and congratulate Kevin M. Simpson, an individual who has already enjoyed a distinguished career as a public servant and who is preparing once again to answer the call to service.

Kevin is a skilled attorney and litigator, and early in his career he made

the decision to devote his formidable legal talents to public service. He defended numerous Federal agencies in a variety of matters during his years as a young trial attorney with the Department of Justice.

In 1997, he served as minority counsel to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee during its campaign finance investigation. During 1998, Kevin was Deputy Chief Investigative Counsel to Minority Members of the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment of President Clinton. In 1999, he became impeachment counsel to Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle and the Minority Members of the United States Senate.

Following his service in the legislative branch, Kevin returned to the executive branch as the Deputy General Counsel of Programs and Regulations at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a position he held until the end of the Clinton administration. It was my pleasure to work with Kevin Simpson at HUD. Kevin earned a reputation for achieving results—all while maintaining unwavering respect for his colleagues and a dedication to fairness and courtesy. He made a difference, and he turned rivals into friends in the process.

It was this commitment to making a difference that led Kevin to join Max Stier, another outstanding HUD alumnus, in launching the nonpartisan, non-profit Partnership for Public Service.

Armed with the seeds of an exciting idea and a generous financial commitment from the late philanthropist Samuel J. Heyman and his wife Ronnie, Max Stier and Kevin Simpson built the Partnership for Public Service to inspire a new generation to serve and transform the way government works. This impressive organization works with Federal agencies to improve their leadership and management, conducts groundbreaking research, and works closely with universities and job seekers, especially young people, to build new pipelines of talent into government service. In less than a decade, the Partnership has made a measurable, positive impact on our government and the story of the Partnership's success cannot be told without Kevin Simpson in a leading role. As the Partnership's Executive Vice President and General Counsel, there are few achievements in the history of the Partnership in which Kevin has not played a pivotal part.

After doing so much to improve the effectiveness of the Federal Government and inspiring a new generation to serve, Kevin is once again answering the call to service—he will soon leave the Partnership for Public Service for his new position as Principal Deputy General Counsel at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. These are extraordinary times for our Nation and our government, and we need extraordinary talent. Kevin Simpson will bring to HUD his intellectual heft, a keen strategic mind and his natural ability to build bridges; he is a

stellar addition to an already strong leadership team led by a most able Secretary.

I thank Kevin Simpson for his years of service to and on behalf of our government and the Federal workforce, and I congratulate him on this next chapter of his public service career. I know all of those who have worked with Kevin share my optimism that our Nation will be a better place thanks to his pursuit of excellence in Federal service.●

RECOGNIZING CAMDEN'S AEROJET FACILITY

● Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I congratulate employees of the Aerojet facility in Camden, AR, for recently achieving the National Safety Council's "Million Work-Hours Award."

Camden Aerojet received the award for reaching one million man hours without "a day away from work injury or illness" between July 7, 2009, and June 14, 2010. In addition to achieving the prestigious "Million Work-Hours Award," the Camden facility also garnered Aerojet's President Safety Award.

I commend each and every employee at Camden Aerojet for this accomplishment, which speaks volumes about their dedication and professionalism. Safety should always be a top priority, and I am proud of these employees for their steadfast efforts to maintain a safe, secure workplace.

I also commend Alice Floyd, Safety Manager at the facility, for her dedicated efforts to maintain safety, and Paul Rich, executive director, for his leadership and commitment to safety.

Camden's Aerojet facility helps provide jobs and economic security for countless Camden-area residents. I am proud of the entire Aerojet team for this significant achievement of winning the "Million Work-Hours Award."●

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL FREY

● Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Mr. Michael Frey, a disabled Missouri veteran whose courage, perseverance, and fortitude are remarkable and in keeping with the finest traditions of Missouri and American values: hard work, independence, humbleness, selfless sacrifice, and more.

As a young 19-year old soldier in Vietnam, Mr. Frey served as a squad leader in Alpha Company 3/21 of the 19th Infantry Brigade. On July 14, 1969, Mr. Frey and the members of Alpha Company were ambushed near the Chu Lai base camp. His spinal cord was shattered by enemy fire, and the injuries rendered him paralyzed from the neck down and dependent on a ventilator for assistance in breathing. Given the extent of his injuries, many doctors would have given Mr. Frey a short time to live, but this special Missourian was

about to prove that his case and that he himself was special.

Mr. Frey returned to the United States and began receiving full-time care through St. Louis-area Veterans Administration, VA, hospitals, where he gained the respect and admiration of the hospital staff for his resilience, problem-solving approach, and positivity even as he faced almost unthinkable limitations. On December 7, 1984, 15 years after his spine was shattered in Vietnam, more than double the time individuals with his type of injuries are projected to survive, Mr. Frey moved out of the Spinal Cord Injury facility at Jefferson Barracks Veterans Hospital and into his own home—a remarkable accomplishment for a person with complete tetraplegia.

Since then, Mr. Frey has lived on his own for over 25 years, and he is still going strong. Today he actively manages his daily care with the help of a team of care specialists, and he continues to take full charge of his health through preventative care and regular collaboration with VA doctors. He has the benefit of a strong social network and a self-confidence that has allowed him to bounce back from setbacks. He also remains an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan and regularly attends games. In fact, Mr. Frey developed a special friendship with the late, great St. Louis Cardinals broadcaster Jack Buck, who befriended Mr. Frey in the 1970s and encouraged him along the way.

Having survived over 40 years since his injury, Mr. Frey is one of the longest living tetraplegics in the VA system. I honor him today for his wonderful example in coping with his disability. His spirited approach to life is emblematic of the courage, honor, and strength of this country's veterans who fight for our freedom. His partnership with the many great professionals in the VA healthcare system in St. Louis, who at once serve him and revere him, is uplifting and embodies how our VA system can work best. I join the people of Missouri, and all Americans, in saluting Mr. Frey's courage and to humbly thank him for all that he has done, and for all that he endured, for this country. Mr. Michael Frey is a true American hero.●

REMEMBERING EERO SAARINEN

● Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mr. Eero Saarinen.

Mr. Saarinen was born in Finland on August 20, 1910, immigrated with his family to the United States in 1923, and became an American citizen in 1940. A master of American 20th century architecture, Mr. Saarinen passed away on September 1, 1961.

In 1948, Mr. Saarinen won the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Competition with his design for the Saint Louis Gateway Arch, creating a monument which, in his words, "would