To: Stacey Leoutsakos  
    Cynthia Leoutsakos-Clausi  
    Stephanie Leoutsakos  

I sincerely regret that I cannot be with you today for this wonderful ceremony in honor of Lieutenant Theodore “Teddy” Leoutsakos, but I did not want this occasion to pass without saying a few words about this special individual who inspired such love and admiration among his colleagues.

Lt. Teddy Leoutsakos lived a life we should all be proud of. He served his country valiantly in Vietnam, where he was wounded in action. He worked at Memorial Sloane Kettering Hospital for more than 20 years as a respiratory therapist. As a New York State Court Officer for 24 years, he was held in the highest regard for his competence and professionalism, and was truly beloved for his warm personality and compassion for others.

When the first aircraft struck the North Tower on 9-11, Teddy commandeered a jury van with fellow court officers and was among the first to arrive on the tragic scene. As he was evacuating tenants and aiding the injured, the South Tower collapsed, burying him in rubble. He managed to dig his way out, escaping largely unharmed that day only to succumb to cancer last year, as have so many first responders exposed to the deadly toxins of Ground Zero.

Today, September 9, 2016, we honor his memory and courageous deeds. It is only fitting that the City of the New York is renaming this street, where Teddy lived his entire life, Lt. Theodore Leoutsakos Way. We thank Council Member Constantinides, Mayor DiBlasio and everyone else, including those in our court family, such as Captain Kevin Duckfield, who made this day possible.

To Teddy’s children, and the family, friends and colleagues he left behind, we sincerely hope and pray that this permanent symbol of our love and respect for Teddy brings you even the smallest measure of comfort for the loss of this strong, unassuming man who lived a life of service, courage and self-sacrifice. We hope this street sign will cause those who see it to reflect, even for a moment, about Teddy Leoutsakos and all the heroes of 9-11 -- the fallen and the standing -- whose heroism gave us hope for the future on that dark day fifteen years ago.
On this national weekend of remembrance and healing, ceremonies like this one all around the country properly show our gratitude to the public safety officers and emergency responders who put their lives on the line every day to protect us, their fellow citizens. On behalf of the entire New York State Judiciary, I thank them for their service.

And, finally, I thank all of you for being here and making this wonderful day possible.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]