



PRESS RELEASE

New York State
Unified Court System

Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge

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Chief Judge DiFiore Unveils State-of-the-Art Facility Designed To Accommodate Training Needs of Court Officers Statewide *New Court Officers Academy Honors the Memories of the Three Heroic NYS Court Officers Who Perished on 9/11*

Brooklyn, New York – Chief Judge Janet DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks today joined court, local and State officials to inaugurate a state-of-the-art training facility dedicated to the memories of three heroic New York State Court Officers who perished in the 9/11 World Trade Center rescue efforts. The new Captain William H. Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens and Sergeant Mitchel Wallace Court Officers Academy in Crown Heights, Brooklyn will serve as the primary training center for some 4,000 New York State Court Officers who, comprising one of the largest law enforcement agencies nationwide, work to ensure the State's courthouses are safe and conducive to the fair administration of justice.

The new academy, which sits on the former site of the St. Theresa School, comprises buildings that once housed classrooms, an auditorium and gym. Combined, the structures—which were fully renovated from the floor plates to the roof and equipped with new elevators, energy-efficient windows, energy-efficient heating, cooling and ventilation systems, and the latest teaching-oriented technology, among other features—measure approximately 60,000 square feet.

One portion of the facility is a four-story structure that has been remodeled to contain five classrooms, a conference room, administrative offices and locker room facilities. The former site of the school's auditorium and gym was converted into a two-story structure and remodeled to include a new lobby, large classroom, and multi-purpose gym and training area featuring a retractable wall and locker room facilities. The two once-separate structures are connected by a newly-built second-story bridge.

The layout of the new facility was customized to provide an optimal training experience, both for newly-recruited officers undergoing basic training and veteran officers of all ranks refreshing their skills in critical areas.

The rigorous, four-month basic training regimen for Court Officer-Trainees includes classroom instruction on criminal law, civil law, family law, constitutional law and arrest procedures, along with training in such areas as intermediary weapons including baton, pepper spray and firearms; proper use of force; first aid, CPR and basic life support; crowd control; tactical communications; domestic violence awareness and mandatory reporting obligations. (Prior to appointment, Court Officer-Trainees must also undergo physical ability testing, medical and psychological screening, and an intensive background investigation.) In-service training for veteran officers covers such critical areas as active shooter scenarios, special response team tactics, changing public safety conditions and emerging threats to the courts.

Along with ensuring that New York State Court Officers are prepared to perform their jobs with the highest level of competence, skill and professionalism, the Academy—located in one of New York's most diverse communities—will also dedicate its mission to building community partnerships to promote career service opportunities and engage in public outreach.

“Court officers not only play a critical role in safeguarding our courts but are also the public face of the court system. They must be highly prepared to handle a wide range of situations, including life-threatening emergencies that require courage and decisiveness. We now have a customized facility that will enable our team of top-notch instructors to pursue and instill excellence in our Court Officers through a broad range of training activities. I am thankful to all those whose commitment made this landmark day possible. I also want to express my collective pride as a court system in being able to dedicate this building to the memories of Captain Thompson and Sergeants Jurgens and Wallace. I hope their family members will take comfort in knowing this wonderful new facility stands in honor of the ultimate sacrifice they made on 9/11,” said Chief Judge DiFiore.

“It is a privilege to join in this important occasion, as we unveil this beautiful, new training academy in honor of the lives of three fallen members of our court family whose selflessness and courage continue to inspire us: Captain William Harry Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens and Sergeant Mitchel Wallace. This fully-equipped facility, designed to accommodate the comprehensive, evolving training needs of the New York Courts’ uniformed officer corps, is a fitting tribute to the deep level of commitment and professionalism demonstrated by these three extraordinary individuals to whom we owe so much,” said Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

“I am proud to participate in the dedication of this magnificent facility in the name of our three fallen heroes. This new training academy will enable the court system to more effectively prepare our officers to meet the security challenges of today’s society and better serve the public,” said Chief Michael Magliano.

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