



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of the City Representative

Melanie Johnson, City Representative

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS CONTACT: Randy Giancaterino
(215) 683-2070 / Randy.giancaterino@phila.gov

Mayor Nutter leads tribute to fallen police officers and firefighters at City's annual Living Flame Memorial Service

Philadelphia, PA (May 5, 2010) -- Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Everett A. Gillison and other City officials honored police officers and firefighters, including deceased **Police Officer John Pawlowski** and Fire Captain Stephen Cospelich, in the annual City of Philadelphia's Living Flame Memorial Service, at Franklin Square Park, Sixth and Race streets, today.

The City of Philadelphia Living Flame Memorial Service recognizes the sacrifices of uniformed Philadelphia police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty.

Since the founding of the Philadelphia Fire Department in 1871, 285 members of the Philadelphia Fire Department have made the ultimate sacrifice in the official line of duty. Police Officer Pawlowski and Fire Capt. Cospelich are among more than 250 Philadelphia police officers and 286 firefighters who have died while serving their fellow citizens since records have been kept in the 1800s.

Mayor Nutter, Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey and Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers led a procession of family members of the fallen Philadelphia police officers and firefighters killed over the years in the line of duty by placing wreaths and carnations at the base of the Living Flame Memorial in Franklin Square Park. The names of Police Officer Pawlowski and Fire Capt. Cospelich recently were inscribed on plaques, joining the roster of deceased police and firefighters on the Living Flame Memorial monument.

"On this solemn occasion, we remember all of our fallen officers and firefighters who selflessly gave their lives while serving and protecting their city and its grateful citizens," said Mayor Nutter. "We will never forget their sacrifices. We offer our deepest sympathy to all of the families who have lost their loved ones -- a wife, husband, son, daughter, father or mother -- in the line of duty. The City of Philadelphia is forever in their debt."

Officer John Pawlowski (Badge #5649), who died February 13, 2009, was shot while thwarting a cab robbery at Broad and Olney. The 25-year-old officer was a five-year veteran assigned to the 35th Police District in Northwest Philadelphia. Police Commissioner Ramsey placed a bouquet of flowers at the memorial on behalf of the officer's family in last year's Living Flame ceremony. At the family's request, Pawlowski, a Northeast Philadelphia resident, officially was added to the honor roll of names on the memorial during the Living Flame Memorial Service in 2010 instead, so that his wife Kim and other family members could be present.

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12th Floor, One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: 215-683-2060 Fax: (215) 683-2099



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ADD 1/ POLICE AND FIRE MEMORIAL SERVICE 2009

Fire Capt. Stephen Cospelich, 56, a 23-year veteran of the Philadelphia Fire Department, was found unconscious on a street while walking his dog in Germantown following a day that included fighting a stressful dwelling fire on the 6300 block of Ogontz Avenue in April 2009. Capt. Cospelich died about one month later, as a result of the injuries incurred officially in the line of duty. At the time of his death, Cospelich was a lieutenant. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of captain in June 2009.

Soloist Renee Robinson, accompanied by musician J. Donald Dumpson, began the ceremony with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem, and the program continued with various musical selections and tributes. The Philadelphia Police and Fire Pipes and Drums as well as the Police Department Honor Guard and Police Department Buglers performed poignant musical tributes during the wreath-laying portion of the program.

City officials were joined by representatives from the families of police and firefighters; Fraternal Order of Police/Philadelphia Lodge #5; Philadelphia Firefighters Union, Local 22; Police and Fire Color Guards; Philadelphia Police and Fire Pipes and Drums Band; Police Department Rifle Team; Police Department Honor Guard; Police Department Buglers; Retired Police, Fire, and Prison Guard Association; Polish Police Association, International German-American Police Association, the American Legion Police Post 937 and various representatives of the clergy, including from the League of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Shomrim Society/Philadelphia, Delaware Valley Region and the Police Chaplains Office, and other participating organizations. Representatives from federal, state and other law enforcement and fire-service agencies also paid their respects. Trained white doves were released from the stage at the conclusion of the ceremony to symbolically honor all of the fallen police and fire personnel.

The Living Flame Memorial Service precedes National Police Memorial Day, which is observed on May 15 nationwide each year.

