

J. Baccellieri: Good morning and welcome. I'd ask at this time that everybody please stand for the presentation of the colors by the New York State Court's Ceremonial Unit.

Speaker 2: Attention. Forward march. Detail, halt. Ready? Face. Present arms.

J. Baccellieri: Please remain standing as we invite the student president of Brooklyn Jesuit Prep, Ryan Brown, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ryan?

Ryan Brown: Good morning. May we now place our right hand over our heart and say the Pledge of Allegiance: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

J. Baccellieri: Thank you, Ryan. Ryan's one of our new neighbors, and we're going to be good neighbors. I'd ask that you still remain standing as we invite court officer, Lethisha Lynch, to sing our National Anthem.

J. Baccellieri: Thank you. Please be seated.

Speaker 2: Ready? Face. Forward march.

J. Baccellieri: Next on our program is a musical salute by the New York State Court's Pipes and Drums.

Speaker 4: Band ready? Facing once again. God Bless America. On the center, quick Band ready?

J. Baccellieri: Again, good morning and welcome. This is such a very proud and special day, and I welcome all of you to this momentous dedication ceremony. The New York State Unified Court System Captain William H. Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens, Sergeant Mitchel Wallace Court Officers Academy. As we begin, please allow me to introduce the high ranking officials seated on our dais. The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals in the State of New York, the Honorable Janet DiFiore; the Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York, Lawrence K. Marks; Chief of the Department of Public Safety, my partner in crime, Michael Magliano. Seated in our audience, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts, the Honorable George Silver; Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, the Honorable Edwina Mendelson; from the Office of Court Administration, Chief of Operations, Barry Clark Esquire; Chief of Management Support, John W. McConnell Esquire; Chief of Administration, John George Esquire. We are also

grateful and blessed to have members of the Thompson, Jurgens, and Wallace families with us today.

There are many important people present with us today. Brother and sisters officer in uniform, our partners in law enforcement, elected officials, colleagues, friends, and family whose support and leadership helped bring this project to fruition and we are extremely grateful. It is impossible to acknowledge of all of you individually, but I must acknowledge the following individuals and their organizations, who may or may not be present. New York State Senator Martin Golden, the dioceses of Brooklyn, Mitchell Giurgola LLP, the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, and I'm not sure if he's here or not but we were expecting the Borough President of Brooklyn, Eric Adams.

We welcome, or I should say we come together today to officially dedicated the New York State Unified Court System Captain William H. Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens, Sergeant Mitchel Wallace Court Officers Academy. We continually hear the term "we will never forget," but sadly with the passage of time and many who were not even born until after the attacks on 9/11/2001 our memories do fade. This dedication and official naming of the academy will serve as a monument and an example of the court system's commitment to ensuring present and future generations will never forget the ultimate sacrifice that these brave officers made, but let me emphatically state we are not here today to honor these men because of the way they died, we are here today to pay homage and honor them for the way they lived.

Treating people with dignity and respect, being civil and courteous, not only to the people they served, but to all they interacted with including their family, friends, colleagues, and coworkers. They put the needs of others above all including their own. They epitomized the qualities we look for and revere in great people. They live the words that many simply give lip service to. These tenets are the cornerstone of basic training at the academy. What better place of learning to teach men and women than this house of learning? Not only about life, but about being professional, about the law, about police science, the use of force, first aid and basic life support, firearms, and all the dangers and challenges of law enforcement, but we also teach tolerance, compassion, service, selflessness, and sacrifice. They learn that in order to be respected, you must be respectful, to depend and care about each other and the people they serve, and they learn who Harry, Tommy, and Mitch were and the everlasting contribution they made to us.

The academy experience is extremely challenging and fulfilling and I get tremendous personal satisfaction seeing the positive transformation of individuals from civilian to officer. I recall after one of our graduations a young recruit sought me out and she explained to me that her academy experience was the most difficult but most positive experience of her life. She said I touched her soul. Now, I don't know if I'm worthy of such praise, but needless to say I was beyond humbled by her sentiments and it made me realize that the ability to reach other people and possibly change the direction of their lives in a positive and profound way is why the academy is so important and why I love my job. I also realize now that during the years I spent sharing an office with Harry Thompson, he touched my soul. We will never forget Harry, Mitch, and Tommy ever.

On a very personal level I want to thank Judge DiFiore, Judge Marks, Ron Younkins, and all those who brought this project from inception to completion. I want to thank Lucian Chalfen, our director of public information, who came to me well over a year ago asking me what my thoughts were about dedicating this magnificent facility and naming it after our fallen heroes. I want to thank all my brothers and sisters in uniform who support me and the academy every day. I want to thank my wife, Mary, and my family, some of whom are here today, for putting up with me and the ungodly amount of time I spend at work each and every day. I want to thank the academy staff, present and past. There is nothing we do not throw at these professional men and women that they don't step up to the plate and ensure completion, satisfaction, and professionalism. I thank them so much for that. I want to express my sincerest, most humble thanks to all of you for trusting me and allowing me the privilege of being the chief of training and commanding officer of the Court Officers Academy. This truly is where it begins and I am grateful and blessed by your unwavering support. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I'm trying not to cry, because you know me, I'm a crier. Now it's my honor and privilege to invite the Chief Judge of the State of New York, the Honorable Janet DiFiore to address the assembly. Your Honor?

Chief Judge DiFiore: Very nicely done. Good morning, everyone. What a great and proud day this is for the New York State Unified Court System as we do come together to officially dedicate this academy as the new Captain William H. Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens, and Sergeant Mitchel Wallace Court Officers Academy right here in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

Our four thousand New York State court officers represent one of the largest law enforcement agencies in the country. Our New York State

court system has been described as the largest, the busiest, and the most complex court system in the world. Notwithstanding the enormous volume, complexities, and challenges that we face on a daily basis, we have the distinction and the great good fortune of being one of the safest court systems in the country. For that distinction we owe a great debt of gratitude, first and foremost, to the dedicated men and women who wear the uniform of New York State court officer. Because we expect so very much from each of our court officers, we owe them much in return and we owe them every opportunity to train to excellence, to perfect the skills, the knowledge, and the judgment they need to protect the public and to ensure their own personal safety in what can sometimes be, as you know, a very dangerous job.

We are reminded of that reality today as we dedicate this superb facility to three outstanding court officers, three heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to all of us on September 1st, 2001. This sixty thousand square foot state-of-the-art training facility was conceived, and it was built with one purpose, to provide our court officers with the very latest and the absolute best professional training and instruction. The leadership here at the academy, our commanding officer and chief of training, Joe Baccellieri and his team of professional trainers, all of whom have been certified as police instructors by the State, are dedicated to just that very mission.

It wasn't long ago that basic training for new court officers was a mere 10 days. Today, our court officer recruits are required to participate in a demanding four-month basic training program that covers every conceivable on-the-job challenge. That training is absolutely critical because our court officers are on the front lines of everything we do, the very first people the public encounters and has direct contact with when they enter our courthouses, and certainly the public face of our court system.

Let me assure you that I know and understand with perfect clarity that our men and women in uniform have very challenging jobs. Every day there are prisoner issues, obstructive behavior, attempts at escape. There are disgruntled litigants to be dealt with, some who indeed lash out and even make threats, and, of course, upset family members, folks who are just plain scared, confused, angry, and who do sometimes disrupt our proceedings. Not to mention all of the other challenges we face: sudden illnesses, accidents, bomb threats, emergency building evacuations, threats to the security of our judges and our staff, and so many other difficult and dangerous situations that require of course, courage and

decisiveness, and most certainly the highest level of training and preparation to effectively and safely meet every one of these challenges.

That's why today is a landmark day for our court system and for all New Yorkers, because we now have a modern academy with custom designed space and amenities, including classrooms with the latest technology, and physical fitness and training facilities that will enable our topnotch team of instructors to pursue and instill excellence in our court officers through a broad range of training activities both inside and outside the classroom setting. As important, our commitment to training is one that is continuing and ongoing. This facility enables us to simultaneously conduct critical in-service training for our veteran court officers in order to update and keep current their skills and knowledge in key areas, honoring our responsibility to provide the opportunity for our ranks to remain neat, trim, and alert at all times.

Of course, our responsibility extends to making certain that our ranks are also appropriately staffed. We inaugurate this new academy today with the largest class in our history, 220 new recruits, together with another 70 recruits who will be trained upstate. In addition, 130 recruits are graduating at the end of this month. We will have over 400 new court officers in place by next spring, and we absolutely need every single one of them. We've been waiting for many years for the opening of this academy, and while it has indeed been somewhat of a long and winding road, I want to thank all those who focused their attention and brought their commitment and perseverance to this project in order to bring us to this wonderful opening day ceremony today. Chief Administrator Judge Marks; our retired executive director, Ron Younkings; Chief Michael Magliano; Chief Joseph Baccellieri; and our OCA facility staff, thank you for the efforts of everyone involved and the New York State Court Officers Academy is finally a reality for all of us and for all of our officers.

The fact that this academy has its home right here in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, one of the most diverse places in our city and across the state, that is a particularly wonderful circumstance for us. It's one that allows us to expand the academy's mission to engage in outreach efforts and to form the partnerships with local colleges and schools necessary to address career service opportunities and public education about the courts, helping ensure our best efforts to achieve a diverse staff serving the public safety needs of everyone who comes through our courthouse doors.

Finally, I want to close by expressing our enormous pride and gratitude as a court system in being able to dedicate this building to the memories of

three brave and selfless members of our uniformed court officers. To the families of Captain Thompson, Sergeant Jurgens, and Sergeant Wallace, it is our hope that the purpose and dedication of this facility brings you some measure of comfort in knowing that this building stands in honor of the ultimate sacrifice that your beloved family member made for all of us on the morning of September 11th, 2001. We promised you we would never forget and we never will. Thank you all for being here.

J. Baccellieri:

Thank you, Your Honor. There are two people I would be remiss if I didn't mention at this time. The Chief Judge just mentioned that training, at one time, was only 10 days. Well, it wasn't that long ago when there was no training whatsoever. The Court Officers Academy was started with the vision of one individual, Chief Thomas Hennessy, who's retired. We invited him to be here today and I was hoping to see him but he didn't seem to be able to make it. He started and his vision is what led us to where we are today. There's one person who has changed the direction and the course of my career and my life, and he was my instructor when I went through the academy, all 10 days of it, and that's Major Robert Gardner, retired, who, in fact is here today. Robert, thank you.

It is my privilege to invite the chief administrative judge of the State of New York, the Honorable Lawrence K. Marks, to address the assembly. Your Honor?

Judge Marks:

Thank you, Chief, and what a great thing it is to be here this morning to commemorate the opening of our new court officer academy. Which, I have to say, was a long time coming, but for all of us here today it was surely worth the wait because with this opening we now have a truly superb training facility for our court security force. This will enable our highly trained, high performing court officers to be even more highly trained and even more high performing. Let me say that few things, if any, are more important in the unified court system than that our uniformed court officers receive the highest level of training. That is because the safety of our judges, court employees, litigants, attorneys, jurors, and all others who work in or use or visit our courthouses, their safety is and must be our utmost priority.

The vitally important work of the courts simply cannot be carried out unless our courthouses are safe. Our courthouses will not be safe unless we have sufficient numbers of highly trained uniformed court officers throughout the state. We had been able to meet that goal over the years, but frankly, it has not been easy. Despite the herculean efforts of Chief Baccellieri and his outstanding academy staff, running training classes for all these years out of that office building on Williams Street in lower

Manhattan and before that out of 80 Centre Street and out of the limited capacity training facilities we have used in the Albany area, that has been challenging to say the least. The wait has been worth it.

I can tell you with great pride that no other court system has a facility like this one. That is primarily because the New York Court System is one of only a very few court systems in the nation that hires, trains, and deploys its own court security officers. The overwhelming number of states rely on local police or sheriff's offices for court security, historically, so did New York. In fact, we still have a few counties upstate that don't have court officers and instead rely on local law enforcement for court security. That is fine, but we firmly believe that the best model is one in which court security is provided by our own people, hired, trained, and deployed by us, which is why the opening of this exceptional new facility is so important a milestone for the unified court system.

The training here will include, in addition to the in-service training mentioned by the chief judge, it will include our rigorous four month basic training regiment which requires, among other things, classroom instruction on basic criminal, civil, family, and constitutional law; firearms training and instruction on the proper use of force, including batons and pepper spray; incident simulations; first aid, CPR, and basic life support training; crowd control; tactical communications; and domestic violence issues and mandatory reporting obligations; and even before basic training, physical ability testing for those seeking to become court officers.

What a feeling of satisfaction it is for all of us, indeed for everyone in our court family to have this new facility dedicated to our heroes, Captain William Harry Thompson, Sergeant Thomas Jurgens, and Sergeant Mitchel Wallace. We are so pleased and honored to be able to do that. What a fitting tribute it is to these three men and to their family members who are here with us today. With their names inscribed on this building they will forever be identified with the highest standard of selflessness and the highest standard of courage. Never better epitomized than by their incredibly brave actions on that horrible day 17 years ago. Their heroism will serve as the hallmark of all the activity that will take place in this facility in the years to come. Congratulations and a heartfelt thanks to everyone who played a role in bringing this project to fruition. What an important day this is for all of us and what an important day this is for the institution we all serve. Thank you.

J. Baccellieri:

Thank you, Your Honor. Now, next it is my privilege to invite my dearest friend, my partner in crime as I alluded to earlier. I don't know if he's Bert

or I'm Ernie, but I'm the better looking one, Chief of the Department of Public Safety, Michael Magliano. Mike?

Chief Magliano: Today you're the better looking one. Good morning, all. Before I begin I would like to say how humbled and honored I am to stand here before the families of Harry, Mitch, and Tom today as we dedicate this facility in their name. We have come a long way since I passed through the Court Officers Academy in 1983. We continue to evolve 35 years or so later. I believe today we are better at what we do, our equipment is better, our technology is better, and certainly our training is better.

This facility will ensure that we continue to evolve and progress forward. We will be able to train more effectively and prepare and equip our officers who do such an important job each and every day. As we move forward we must never be complacent. We must work harder and be more focused. The public we serve expects this, and more importantly, deserves it. Even with the best of training we are asked to make instantaneous decisions to things that occur of which we have very little information or control. That's what Harry, Mitch, and Tom did over 17 years ago.

Let us remember there is no greater call in life when a man or woman lays down his or her life in the service of others. Please understand that the names inscribed on this plaque never wanted the spotlight and always put the welfare of others above themselves. We must remember our fallen by the way we conduct ourselves, both professionally and personally. The plaques and pins we wear are only material items, those items serve to focus our memories, but the real honor is how we carry on. We shall honor them by the service we give to those who pass through our doors. This new facility will enable the court system to more effectively prepare our officers to meet the challenges of today's society and better serve the public who seek our assistance.

The word dedication has two meanings, one is what we're here for today. The dedication unveiling of this new facility. The other meaning is the quality of being dedicated to a task and a purpose. A dedication to one's duties, commitment, diligence, perseverance, hard work, and effort. We'll be able to achieve that dedication through our continued training in this very facility.

Lastly, three words come to mind when I think of this facility today. The first is opportunity, we now have an opportunity to do things like we never have before. The second is excitement, excitement in a sense that this facility offers a learning experience like no other. Lastly, is legacy, the



legacy of Harry, Mitch, and Tom. May God bless us, comfort us, and keep us safe now and always. I thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning.

J. Baccellieri: Thank you, Michael. Okay, at this time I believe Joe Jurgens would like to come and address the assembly. Sir?

Joe Jurgens: Thank you. I just wanted to thank everybody. I knew this was going to happen so this is why I didn't prepare a speech is because I wouldn't get through it. I wanted to thank everybody here and who has continually come out for these occasions, and especially today. We wanted to thank you from the Jurgens, the Blakemans and the Tuohys. Thank you very much for showing up and never forgetting. Thank you again.

J. Baccellieri: Michael Thompson, Harry's son, would like to address the assembly. Michael.

M. Thompson: Good morning. Wow. This is a tremendous honor. First of all, I'd just like to start by thanking the honorable judges of New York State. Thank you for being here. Thank you for the kind words. Certainly, a big thank you to our chiefs in the back here. Certainly, you were instrumental in pulling through this initiative so thank you for bringing this to fruition, much appreciated. Joe, you are family. I have my Unified Court System family, the academy, and ... Many don't know the night that they recovered my father's body Joe was in the medical examiner's van taking care of my dad, and I'll never forget that and I love you.

Joe Jurgens: I love you too.

M. Thompson: I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize the Wallace and Jurgens families. I believe you've become so close over the past 17 years and I love you as well. What a tremendous honor for Mitch and Tommy and well-deserved congratulations to you both. I'm the sole flier today for the family today representing Harry. My children are in college and my wife and my mom are at some affair that they couldn't get out of, but certainly I proudly represent the entire Thompson family standing before you extremely humbled and honored and very proud of this dedication and this commemorative event will certainly be an indelible part of my life.

I will leave you with this, so those that didn't know my father, physical fitness was certainly paramount to him. I think many of you would attest to that. My younger brother and I when we were small my dad used to always make us do pushups. Maybe I was 12 or 13 years old and I'm trying to crank out about 25-30 pushups and he would say, "That's it." I'm

like, "Dad, I can't go anymore." He's like, "Sure you can." One thing I want to leave you with today and certainly this was part of the hallmark of my father, he used to say to me, "Whenever you think you don't have anything left, that's when you have to dig down, that's when you have to grind it out, and you'll be surprised what you can do if you can [inaudible 00:41:47]."

I think that's apropos for the academy, the students, and the Unified Court to understand that my father on September 11, 2001, those were the things that he was thinking about, along with Mitch and Tommy when they made the ultimate sacrifice to give up their life. When you think you don't have enough, you certainly have more. With that I say thank you, and thank you for allowing me to be here today.

J. Baccellieri: Don't kid yourself, Michael, you were never small. At this time, I'd ask that all the family members gather around. Please come up, all three families. Please. Judge? Your Honor?

Chief Judge DiFiore: [inaudible 00:42:43].

J. Baccellieri: This plaque will be mounted in the lobby of this building and it will hang there forever, and forever remind everybody that walks through these doors what these three men did on September 11th and what they stood for. We are so proud and honored to have it hang in those walls and what these men mean to us and what they will mean to all future generations who come through these doors to learn what it is to not only be a court officer, to be a good human being. We thank them for that, forever. Thank you.

Michael, if your father was here he could probably pick that up, put it on the wall himself. Thank you.

All right, okay. Everybody take their seats. Now, to close out the ceremony I'd ask that everybody stand and we ask Officer Lethisha Lynch to sing God Bless America. Thank you.

Lethisha Lynch: Thank you for the surprise, Chief. All right.

J. Baccellieri: Thank you all. This concludes our dedication ceremony. Thank you all for being here today. God bless you all. God bless America.