

32 PRECINCT MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY

BY DET. ROBERT MLADINICH

Amid the threat of imminent rain and a flood of tears by many of those in attendance, three police officers were added to the 32 Precinct Memorial Wall at a bitter-sweet rededication ceremony on September 1. Joining the 13 fallen heroes already honored there were **Det. Francis X. O'Rourke**, Ptl. Joseph F. Scott, and Ptl. James A. Dandridge. Detective O'Rourke suffered a heart



Police Commissioner Bernard B. Kerik with family members of Ptl. James A. Dandridge. (L-R): wife Barbara Dandridge Peterman, daughters Sherilyn and Antonia.

attack while attempting to apprehend a suspect on January 21, 1958; Ptl. Scott was purposely struck by a vehicle he was trying to stop after it hit a pedestrian on March 11, 1930; and Ptl. Dandridge was killed by an accidental discharge on October 19, 1967.

Deputy Inspector Vincent Coogan, the commanding officer of the 32 Precinct, remembers entering the command as a young beat cop and coming face to face with the Memorial Wall, which has long been a great source of pride for all assigned there. "I will never forget that image as long as I live," he said. "I immediately thought about the great sacrifice they had all made, and the immense suf-



Police Commissioner Kerik with Sgt. Linda Anderson of TARU. Her husband, PO Bruce Anderson, was killed in an RMP crash while responding to a report of a person shot in 1974.

fering their families must have endured. They will always be heroes in my eyes, as well as in the eyes of every member of this Department."

Police Commissioner Bernard B. Kerik also remembers being impacted by the Memorial Wall the first time he entered the command, as an undercover officer assigned to Manhattan North Narcotics. But his memories go back even further. As a teenager growing up in Paterson, New Jersey, he read all he could about the NYPD and dreamed of someday joining its ranks. He clearly remembers the cold-blooded murders of Ptl. Waverly M. Jones and Joseph A. Piagentini on May 21, 1971, and all the ensuing controversy.

"The fact that Ptl. Jones was black and Ptl. Piagentini was white left an indelible impression on me," he explained. "At the time there was no shortage of racial conflict in the country, but this incident made it very



Police Commissioner Kerik with family members of Ptl. Joseph A. Piagentini. (L-R): wife Diane, daughters Deborah and Mary.

clear to me that justice, goodness, decency, and integrity were color blind. I knew then and there that in the law enforcement community there is no such thing as differentiation by color. All of the men on this Wall served the City of New York with courage, honor, and an undeniable sense of dignity."

"I have so few memories of my father, so this is really touching for

PHOTOS: MICHAEL GABRIELE, NYPD PHOTO UNIT



Retired Sgt. Paul Morton, who transported Ptl. Waverly Jones to the hospital in his RMP, with members of the slain officer's family. (L-R): sister Glenna Wright, sister-in-law Carol Jones, niece Tiffany Jones, brother-in-law Manny Jones.

me," said Sherilyn Dandridge, who was just five years old at the time of his death. "I think it will finally bring me some much needed closure."

"Of course this is difficult, but I'm just so glad it is being done," added her mother, Barbara Dandridge Peterman. "I conditioned myself for this day, so I am very glad to be here."

The rededication efforts were spearheaded by Sgt. Michael Casey and POs Richard Flaherty, Lisa Reams, and Michael Sasson, all of whom put an extraordinary amount of effort into this most emotional endeavor. "These officers will always be in our hearts and prayers," said Sgt. Casey. "It is important for their family members to know they will never be forgotten, not by them and certainly not by us."



Several officers put an inordinate amount of work into making the rededication ceremony such a success. Shown here with Police Commissioner Kerik are (L-R): POs Lisa Reams, James Greene, the PBA delegate; Sgt. Michael Casey, PO Michael Sasson. Not pictured: PO Richard Flaherty.

The 32 Precinct Memorial Wall: Ptl. Joseph F. Scott, Joseph Burke, John Pendergrass, Leroy Shears, Harry Padian, Anthony Buckner, Benjamin Wallace, Sam Katz; **Det. Francis X. O'Rourke**; Ptl. Francis X. Walsh, James A. Dandridge; Sgt. Henry J. Tustin, Ptl. Waverly M. Jones, Joseph A. Piagentini; POs Ralph J. Stanchi, Bruce Anderson.