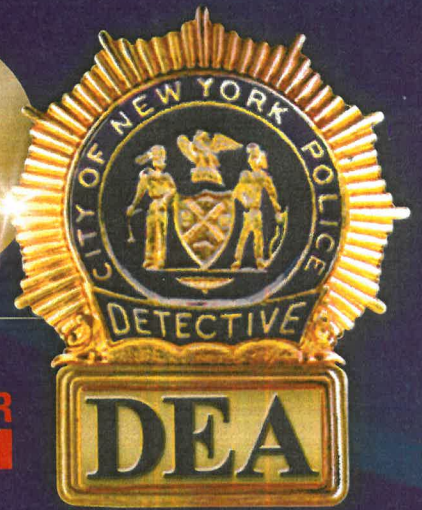


# THE GOLD SHIELD

WINTER  
2021



The Union Representing the Greatest Detectives *in the World*

## DEA *Remembers*



Det. Raymond Abear



Det. Robert Cardona



Det. Cedric Dixon



Det. Christopher B. McDonnell



Det. Jack Polimeni



Det. Jeffrey A. Scalf



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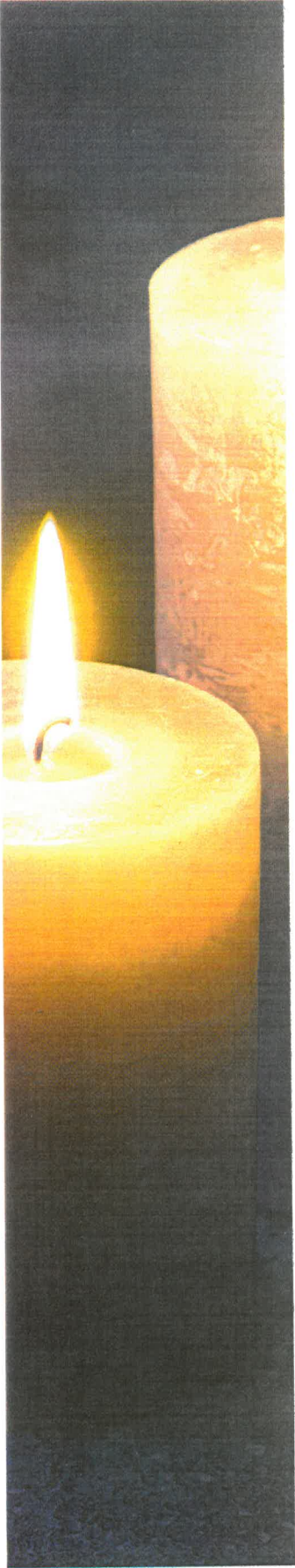
Det. Jack Polimeni

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# The DEA Remembers







Through the tremendous efforts of our union, and our work with City and State legislators, on May 29, 2020, the COVID-19 Line-of-Duty Death Benefit bills (S. 8427 and A.10528) passed both the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly; and on May 30, the Governor signed the bills into law. This provides line-of-duty death benefits to our active members who died because of the coronavirus. This devastating pandemic, which has wreaked havoc on the entire world, struck in full force in February 2020, and, by mid-March, both New York City and State were in lockdown with businesses shuttered and shelter-in-place orders mandated throughout the State.

But the work of our members never slows down; and, in fact, it increased exponentially as the City also erupted into a frenzy of social protests, including rioting and looting. Amidst this chaos and disorder, the DEA lost six active Detectives to COVID-19, while many others became seriously ill. The May passage of the Death Benefit law ensured that our LOD families will remain financially stable and be provided the health benefits they richly deserve as they deal with the devastating loss of their loved ones in this frightening, unpredictable, and unprecedented era.

On July 20, 2020, NAPO notified us that Congress, which originally contemplated two different versions of a coronavirus bill, worked together to pass S. 3607, the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act, which establishes a presumption under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program that an Officer's death or disability due to contracting COVID-19 is deemed in the line of duty. On August 14, 2020, the President signed the bill into law.

This is a big victory for NAPO. More than 125 active Law Enforcement Officers in the United States have died from COVID-19, and now their families will get death benefits. To qualify for the presumption, an Officer must have engaged in a line-of-duty action or activity between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021, and received a diagnosis of COVID-19 (or evidence indicates that the Officer had COVID-19) during the 45-day period beginning on the last day of duty for the Officer. For death benefits, evidence must indicate that the Officer had COVID-19 or complications from COVID-19 at the time of death.

# Det. Jack Polimeni



Det. Jack Polimeni was born May 5, 1969, and grew up in the Dyker Heights section of Brooklyn. After graduating from the private, Catholic school Xaverian High, he attended St. John's University where he studied

public administration. But having family members in the NYPD enticed Polimeni to pursue a career in civil service, and he was appointed to the New York Police Department on April 15, 1997.



His first partner on the job was one of his Academy classmates, Angelo Pirozzi, who became not only his Transit colleague, but also one of his closest

friends and eventually his brother-in-law. Pirozzi, now an SBA Delegate assigned to the 78th Precinct, tells it this way:

"When we were in the Academy, we were in the second class. They didn't tell us if we were going to the street, or to Transit or Housing. The day before Jack and I graduated, they pulled us out of class. We had no idea beforehand that we were headed to Transit. The ammunition was different, so that's why we had to report to the Range. We were assigned to the same Transit Brooklyn Task Force.

"At first, we were miserable together. We didn't want it. We had been all excited about being on the street. But it wound up being a blessing in disguise. Great guys worked in Transit and after a short while we *loved* it. So Jack and I wound up on the same career path. We worked

together in plainclothes and it was the best thing that ever happened. We were partners for about five years."

On August 2, 2003, Pirozzi got married. "I invited a lot of colleagues from my module to the wedding," he says. "There were several couples, but Jack came by himself." At the reception at Russo's on the Bay in Queens, a female colleague approached Angelo's sister, Patricia, and said she wanted to introduce her to her brother's partner, Jack. Patricia, a pre-school teacher known as "Trish," and Jack wound up chatting the entire evening, and the next day Jack called her and set up their first date. Patricia can't prove it, but she believes her brother really engineered the love match.

"The first time I met Jack," she says, "I loved his personality and his sense of humor. His smile and his laugh — it was all infectious. He was just an all-around great guy. He's the type of man who, when you meet him, you feel like you've known him your whole life."

When Pirozzi returned from his honeymoon, he says, Jack was hesitant to tell him he was dating his sister. He clearly didn't want to lose his partner's friendship if something went wrong. But fortunately for the whole family, nothing did, and 2003 turned out to be a memorable year for Polimeni's career as well as his love life.

"Our Transit module team had 24 members and we wanted to get to Central Warrants," Pirozzi explains, "but the Department wouldn't let us leave, because of personnel shortage issues at the time. The Department held us up. So, we put in a grievance with the PBA and we won and we all got our gold shields."

On June 27, 2003, Polimeni was promoted to Detective, and by August he was transferred to the above-ground Warrants Division where he spent the rest of his career.

"I knew Jack back when he was in Transit," says Det. Billy Acosta, a close friend of Polimeni's for 20 years. "I was



in the Warrant Squad of the Housing Police prior to the merge. We met around 1998 or so, because we would see each other in Court all the time.

"I went to Manhattan Warrants in 2002," Acosta continues. "We maintained our friendship and eventually got very close. Our wives speak with each other almost every day.

"In each Warrants team, there's one Supervisor and approximately eight Detectives and Jack was the go-to guy people wanted on their team."

"He was a physically powerful guy," says Warrants veteran, second grade Det. Jason Maggio. "Jack played football and when it came down to fighting with a perp, he was the first one in and the first in the door. He made you feel good and comfortable. He was, all around, a dynamite guy."

But his physique wasn't the first thing anyone noticed about Polimeni. "He always had a killer smile on his face," says Acosta. "He would just light up the room."

And according to Pirozzi, Jack always treated everyone with such respect that he was trusted and loved by his colleagues. "As a cop," Pirozzi says, "Jack was sometimes too nice. He treated everybody like they were his best friends. He was sometimes too nice to the perps!"

"Jack was a great partner," says Acosta. "He was dedicated. He loved the job. I never had to worry, he always had my back. I had his back. If I ever needed anything, he was there for me. I had several high-profile, robbery pattern

cases, and I asked him to help me, and he would always jump in with no hesitation. He would switch days to help me out. I never had to worry about anything. Jack was always with me every step of the way."

Maggio, who retired out of Manhattan Warrants in May 2020, says, "The first thing I think of when I think about Jack was his big, warm smile. He was like a little bear, such a

loving guy. His smile made you smile. And he was a very good listener. You could sit and talk and you'd be rambling on about your problems, and Jack would just be listening.

"And he was a really good Detective. When he spoke to people, he was very friendly, people really trusted him. He was warm and had empathy. He exuded honesty. And he would obtain information from violent subjects. He could get information out of them, because he was an inner-City guy. Jack was respectful, so they trusted him."

"I've worked with a lot of people throughout my career," says Pirozzi, who was promoted to Sergeant in 2009. "And there isn't a person who I've ever bumped into who doesn't have great things to say about Jack."

An avid hunter and fisherman, Polimeni would spend time with his brother and his friends pursuing game upstate, but that didn't appeal to Trish, a Brooklyn girl through and through, who preferred less rustic surroundings. In 2009, the couple got engaged during Christmas, but had to wait until 2011 to book the date Patricia wanted to honor her late father. They held the wedding on October 14th at Russo's on the Bay and moved into a two-family house in Marine Park, Brooklyn. When they weren't working, the couple ensconced themselves in an assortment of activities that kept life joyful.

"We definitely spent lots of time with family," says Patricia, and that included her own mom, also named Patricia, and Jack's mother Madeline, although Jack's father Michael recently passed away. Patricia's brother Angelo and his wife Christine have three daughters. Jack's brother Michael is married to wife Jennifer, and Jack's sister Kathy has two sons.

And there were other activities on their priority list. "Jack and I were definitely real foodies," Trish says. "Jack always talked about food and restaurants. He'd want to go out, and I used to tease him by saying, 'You don't have to twist my arm!'" The pair would head off to a steak house or an Italian restaurant. Both Jack and Patricia celebrated their Italian heritage with their mutual love of cooking. "Jack was a big BBQ guy, very much into barbequing and smoking meats; he was a real steak lover."

"Jack knew the best places to eat," says Maggio. "On the job, we call them 'hits:' the places to go to get a meal. Jack really knew his places."



## Det. Jack Polimeni



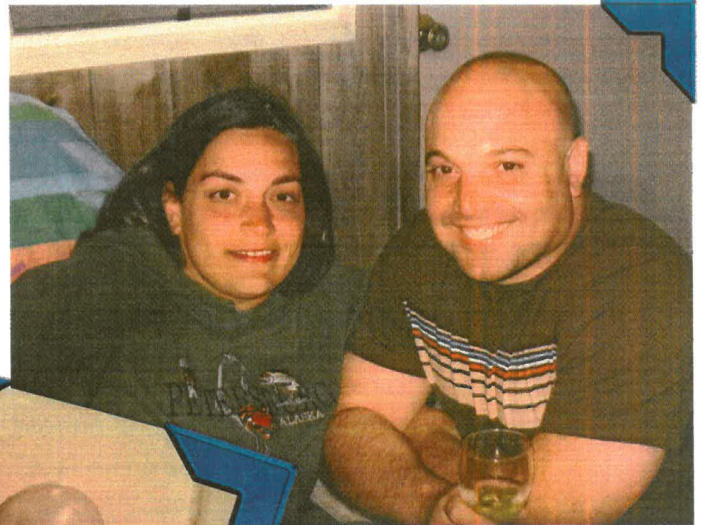
"We loved to travel, too," Trish adds, noting that two of Jack's favorite destinations were Aruba and Las Vegas. Polimeni also unabashedly enjoyed video games. "Jack's relaxation was his time with his Xbox, especially when he needed to wind down from work. He even met some other law enforcement guys in other states through his video gaming," she notes.

A big sports fan, Polimeni enjoyed baseball and hockey. "But his heart," Trish says, "was rooted in football. We would go to sporting events with the family. Jack loved to play and he played for a large part of his life," she adds, noting that Polimeni was on his high school team. "He was a big Raiders fan, but as he got older, he became a New York Giants fan."

And, as the years wore on, Jack also grew closer to his brother-in-law. "I started having kids," says Pirozzi, "and Jack treated my children like they were his own. Jack was a great family man. He was a great uncle to my three daughters, but Jack was the *worst* fantasy football player in the history of fantasy football." The thought still makes Pirozzi laugh. "Every year, we included him in our league. He was all gung ho, but his team would take a nose dive real quickly."

"Later in life," says his wife, "Jack became very much into working out and staying fit. I just like to walk and he would tease me. 'Walking is not working out!,' he'd say."

"But staying fit was necessary in Manhattan Warrants," Trish adds. "They go after the 'worst of the worst.' Jack went into work at weird hours, all hours of the day and night," she says. "You really have to stay on your toes and be on your game at all times with Warrants." And her husband loved it. "He loved everybody he worked with," she says. "And he did it for a long time."



"In 2011, Jack and I both got transferred into a unit called JAWS, Joint Absconder Warrants Squad," says Acosta. "It's a team between Warrants and New York State Parole. We went after the parole absconders: robbers, murderers, burglars. We tracked them down, took them into custody, and sent them back to State prison. We were on the same team until 2018, when Jack got injured and then Jack stayed inside."

For two years, Polimeni had a ruptured Achilles heel and ended up having surgery. He was out of work for a few months. When he returned to the job, he went back to a lighter duty, and Patricia was relieved, because she knew he would be safer than when he was hunting down violent, wanted perpetrators.

"Everyone treated him so well after the surgery. They really took care of him," she says. "And I used to tease him: I said I was hoping he would stay out of the action, because I wanted him to finish his career being safe."

"I used to worry every day when the phone rang. I always worried about gunshots. Jack went after the heavy hitters,



the parolees, the most violent perps, but he came home every night. He got bruises and would get all banged up. But he always got through it. You can't get crazy all the time. But it was always in the back of my mind. I finally felt at ease that he was in an office. And I can't believe he was sitting at a desk and got a virus and couldn't fight it. It's a silent bullet."

"My birthday was March 10," says Acosta, "and Jack and I spent the day together. Everything was fine; we were joking around all day. We talked about St. Patrick's Day. My wife is Irish, and every year we look forward to the Emerald Society party on the west side of Manhattan at the Pier. For the longest time, we wanted Jack to go. He finally went the last two years and he loved it. We were all set for it this year. We had no idea what would happen. The pandemic hit, the Pier party was canceled, and then, about a week later, Jack got sick."



"Ironically," Trish says, "I had been teaching from home, remotely, when Jack and I both got sick within days of each other. Jack started to feel ill and his Captain sent him home from work on March 20. He asked if we should separate and I said no. Jack was home sick for about ten days, and we were in contact with the doctor every day. The doctor thought the hospital was too dangerous. He told Jack just to take a lot of fluids, get rest, do some walking, and go to hospital when and if he couldn't breathe.

"After day ten, on March 31, the hospital admitted him. He was in the hospital for another ten days. One day he would feel better, and then he'd take two steps back and feel worse. It was an emotional rollercoaster."

Polimeni was on the job for 23 years and the affection he had for the people he worked with came back to the family after his death.

"I had five years more on the job than Jack did," Acosta says. "We would joke about it, and he would tell me, 'You can't retire until I hit 25, and you hit 30, and then we'll have one, huge party.' Acosta retired out of Manhattan Warrants at the end of July 2020. "We didn't hit our goal. We both left the job the same year, but in different ways.

"I was never able to speak with him again," Acosta continues. "He went into the hospital and went into a coma. Everything went downhill fast. It's been very tough to deal with. I considered him my brother, not just a coworker. I had a lot of love for him and Trish. It's been hard for my wife and I to believe it actually happened, especially that quick. I miss him dearly."

"The Police Department, everyone, has been amazing from the moment he got sick," says Patricia. "Everyone has gone above and beyond. They took me back and forth to visit Jack when he was in the hospital. It was amazing. From people he used to work with, to old bosses, they said to me, 'we're a fraternity. We stand by our own.'"

"We couldn't do everything we wished and it was challenging," she continues, noting the restrictions the City and State put on wakes. "But the funeral parlor let ten people in at a time. We didn't want any parents to catch anything. Every Officer came in and everybody had beautiful things to say. They all talked about Jack's smile and his laugh. He was always happy. Never angry. Never mad. They said, 'To know him was to love him.'"

"Eventually, I want to do everything we can to honor his police work. I made sure we put him in his uniform for

Continued on page 39

*To my Family in Blue — the DEA,*

*My family and I want to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. Every gesture — if it was food, supplies, a kind word, or a shoulder to cry on — was comforting and did not go unnoticed. You all helped to make a horrific time a little more bearable. We love each and every one of you!*

*Love,*

*Patricia Polimeni and Family*

## Det. Jack Polimeni



Continued from page 33

burial. Jack wasn't in uniform very often; he dressed for Warrants in plain clothes, unless he was working a detail or ceremonies.

But he really enjoyed putting it on. Jack loved working UNGA," she says wistfully, noting Polimeni enjoyed working the United Nations General Assembly detail on the east side of Manhattan.

"We put his shield in his casket. I will treasure that," Trish says. "But his police

bosses assured me that when this all settles down, the Department will do something for the family and friends and we can all be part of that. The union, and Monsignors Cassato and Romano, have been amazing. They came to the cemetery and prayed for Jack, and for the time when we can have a proper send off and memorial."

"We have a very amazing family: very on board and supportive. But now, the entire Police Department is family. And now I am stressed about everyone else working out in the field. Now I have to worry about his colleagues. Now we have a bigger police family to take care of."

Jack Polimeni passed away on April 10, 2020, on Good Friday. He was 50 years old.

NYPD Monsignor Robert Romano said, "God only takes the best on Good Friday."

