

# FALLEN FINEST

## **POLICE OFFICER MATTHEW A. DZIERGOWSKI** 123 Precinct



**O**n Sunday, February 14, 1999, Police Officer Matthew Dziergowski was killed after his police vehicle was struck by another vehicle at the scene of an earlier accident.

It was a little past 5:00 am and Officer Dziergowski, along with three other officers, had just finished laying out flares and cones to divert traffic from the West Shore Expressway, due to an overturned tractor trailer, at the entrance of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Parkway in Staten Island. The other officers were outside of their vehicles when Officer Dziergowski saw the headlights of an SUV approaching at a speed later determined to be approximately 80 miles per hour. He warned the other officers, then pulled his patrol car in front of the oncoming vehicle to shield them. His police cruiser was struck on the driver's side and pushed into a guard rail.

Officer Dziergowski was extricated by Emergency Services Units and Fire Department Personnel and then quickly flown to Bellevue Hospital but he did not survive his injuries. The other three officers on the scene were also injured – one of them seriously.

The suspect was charged and found guilty of criminally negligent homicide and three counts of assault.

On September 25, 2000, Officer Dziergowski was posthumously awarded the New York City Police Department's Medal of Honor for his heroic actions. Additionally, on December 20, 2000, he became the first posthumous recipient of the prestigious of the New York State 1999 Police Officer of the Year Award, which was presented by then-Governor George E. Pataki.

Police Officer Matthew A. Dziergowski, who was 38 years old, served with the NYPD for 15 years and 6 months. He was survived by his wife, Maria; their oldest son, Daniel; their youngest son, Matthew, who Maria was carrying at the time; his parents, Anthony and Rosaria; as well as his brothers, Anthony and Mark.

Maria Dziergowski continues her husband's legacy by assisting grieving police families as the 2nd Vice-President of the Survivors of the Shield organization.

