



*Congratulations to the  
2010 Fire Service Community  
Achievement Award Winner!*

**Past Fire Service Community Achievement Award Recipients**

<b>Year:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Fire Department:</b>
1994	Joseph B. Kuhn	Penfield Fire Company, Inc.
1995	Gus Wehrin	Farmington Volunteer Fire Association, Inc.
1996	Richard F. Laitenberger	Union Hill Fire Department
1997	William J. Reilly	West Babylon Fire Department
1998	William A. Wutz	Hutchinson Hose Company
1999	Robert V. Lyon	Setauket Fire Department
2000	No Award Given	
2001	Bernard O. Monson	Albertson Hook & Ladder, Engine & Hose Company No. 1
2002	James Mahoney	Northport Fire Department
2003	No Award Given	
2004	John S. DaVanzo	Mineola Fire Department
2005	Joseph E. Sills, Jr.	A.H. Wicks Engine & Truck Company
2006	James Crowley	Woodstock Fire Co. No. 4
2007	Warren J. Rathke	Wright's Corners Volunteer Fire Co.
2008	Thomas P. Sullivan	Mombasha Fire Company
2009	Philip F. DeLorenzo	Piermont Volunteer Fire Department



**2010  
FIRE SERVICE  
COMMUNITY  
ACHIEVEMENT**  
*Ernest Matthews*

**Presented June 2, 2010  
at the Hillcrest Fire Station  
in Orchard Park, NY**

# Ernest Matthews

## FIRE SERVICE COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT



Since he became a member of Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Company on March 12, 1980, Ernest “Ernie” Matthews has been actively involved in the leadership and training of the organization. In fact, prior to being formally accepted as a member, Matthews had enrolled in his Essentials of Firemanship Class and was actually in class on the night of his acceptance into the fire service.

Throughout the years, Matthews has held many fire service, as well as, executive offices at Hillcrest. He was truck lieutenant for five years, fire captain for

five years, second assistant chief for five years, first assistant chief for two years, and chief for seven years, including this current year. Matthews has been corresponding secretary, chairman of the Grove Committee at Hillcrest and chairman of the annual Firemen’s Day at the Erie County Fair for Hillcrest for 13 years.

Matthews’s other fire service-related activities include being a life member of the Erie County Fire Chiefs’ Mutual Aid Organization where he was director for two years, second vice president for two years, first vice president for one year and president for two years. He has been an active member of the Erie County Disaster Preparedness Advisory Board since 2004 and he was appointed assistant director coordinator for the Town of Orchard Park in 2009. Matthews has been a member of the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs for 25 years as well as a member of FASNY and the Erie County Volunteer Firemen’s Association.

Since the ice water rescue team for the Town of Orchard Park began, four years ago, Matthews has been an active member of the team, having been trained by a group of instructors from New Jersey who specialize in ice water rescue. Additionally, Matthews has been on the FAST team for the Town of Orchard Park since its inception, over 10 years ago.

While Matthews has invested a lot of time and energy into the fire service aspect of Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Company, he has also been an active emergency response provider, holding an active EMT card for 28 years. In 1999, Matthews was awarded

the EMS Award from the Erie County Fire Chiefs’ Mutual Aid Organization after successfully performing CPR on a man whose car had run off the road after he had suffered a heart attack.

Matthews is dedicated to his role as being an active member of the Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Company, but he also finds the time to be active in several community activities. Matthews spends his Saturday mornings helping out with the Skating Association for the Blind and Handicapped (SABAH) where, due to his leadership qualities, he has been “promoted” to instructor. In his role as an instructor, he assists with preparing a program for those disabled skaters who perform at the HSBC arena in March every year. In 2008, SABAH awarded Matthews the Gary George Jr. Unsung Hero Award.

On Saturday afternoons, Matthews is involved with helping the physically and mentally challenged youth who skate with the Gliding Stars Adaptive Ice Skating Program. This group also develops programs for their skaters, which ends with a performance at the Pepsi Center in March.

Matthews has been active in his church community, having served as a trustee in the past, and he is currently an usher at church services. He is also a member of the Red Knights motorcycle organization that promotes a sense of community and brotherhood with the firefighters from throughout Erie County.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, Matthews has been extremely involved in activities supporting the search for improved treatment and, hopefully, a cure for Cystic Fibrosis for the past 21 years. Matthews’s daughter, Nicole, has been afflicted with the disease, which has incited Matthews to become chairman of the annual Great Strides Walk for the past 12 years.

Matthews’s dedication to the fire service is rooted in his father’s membership at the Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Company, where he served as chief for a total of six years. Matthews’s two daughters are active members at Hillcrest, and his wife is past president of the ladies’ auxiliary.

Matthews has been employed by the Town of Orchard Park Highway Department for 24 years. Of those 24 years, Matthews was a foreman for six years, after which he became Deputy Highway Superintendent, and he has held that position for seven years. He and his family have resided in Orchard Park for 26 years.

Matthews expends a lot of energy participating in all of these activities, both fire service- and community-oriented. Yet, he has worked hard and has attained the Top Responder Award at the Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Company for the last eight years and has been in the top 10 for the past 24 years.

*Letter of recommendation submitted by Hillcrest Volunteer Fire Company Secretary Robert Davis.*