**Harriet Tubman**

The following biography was provided by “Spectrum: Home and School Magazine.”

Harriet Tubman was born Harriet Ross in Dorchester County, Maryland in 1820. Her parents were from the Ashanti tribe of West Africa, and they worked as slaves on the Brodas plantation. In addition to producing lumber, Edward Brodas raised slaves to rent and sell. Life was difficult on the plantation, and Harriet was hired out as a laborer by the age of 5.   
Harriet did not like to work indoors, and she was routinely beaten by her masters. By her early teens, Harriet was no longer allowed to work indoors and was hired out as a field hand. She was a hard worker but considered defiant and rebellious. When she was 15 years old, Harriet tried to help a runaway slave. The overseer hit her in the head with a lead weight, which put Harriet in a coma. It took months for her to recover, and for the rest of her life, Harriet suffered from blackouts.

In 1844, Harriet married a free black man named John Tubman. Harriet remained a slave, but she was able to stay in Tubman's cabin at night. Although she was married, Harriet lived in fear of being shipped to the deep South, a virtual death sentence for any slave. In 1849, her fears were realized when the owner of the Brodas plantation died and many of the slaves were scheduled to be sold. After hearing of her fate, Harriet planned to escape that very night. She knew her husband would expose her, so the only person she informed was her sister.

Harriet made the 90 mile trip to the Mason-Dixon line with the help of contacts along the Underground Railroad. She had to hike through swamps and woodland. Harriet's trip was successful, and she settled in Philadelphia. She worked as a dishwasher and made plans to rescue her family. The next year, Harriet traveled back to Maryland and rescued her sister's family. She then returned to transport her brothers to the North. She went back for her husband, but he had remarried and did not want to follow her. In 1857, Harriet finally returned for her parents and settled them in Auburn, New York.

By this time, Harriet was becoming quite well known and huge rewards were offered for her capture. Harriet was the master of disguise. A former master did not even recognize her when they ran into each other on the street. She was nicknamed the "Moses of her people" for leading them to freedom. In all, Harriet made 19 trips on the Underground Railroad and freed more than 300 slaves.

With the arrival of the Civil War, Harriet became a spy for the Union army. She later worked in Washington DC as a government nurse. Although Harriet won admiration from the military, she did not receive a government pension for more than 30 years. At the end of the war, Harriet returned to her parents in Auburn. She was extremely poor and the profits of a book by Sarah Bradford entitled “Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman”, published in 1869 were a great financial help.

In 1870, Harriet married Nelson Davis, who she had met at a South Carolina army base. They were happily married for 18 years until Davis' death. In 1896, Harriet purchased land to build a home for sick and needy blacks. However, she was unable to raise enough money to build the house and ultimately gave the land to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The church completed the home in 1908, and Harriet moved there several years later. She spent her last years in the home telling stories of her life to visitors. On March 10, 1913, Harriet died of pneumonia. She was 93 years old.

Harriet Tubman was not afraid to fight for the rights of African-Americans. Her story is one of dedication and inspiration. During her lifetime Harriet was honored by many people. In 1897, her bravery even inspired Queen Victoria to award her a silver medal.

**Amadou Diallo**

The following biographical material was provided by the Amadou Diallo Educational and Charity Foundation.

Amadou Diallo was born on September 2, 1975 in the village of Sinoe, Liberia, West Africa. He was the first of four children born to Saikou and Kadiatou Diallo. Amadou has one sister, Laouratou, and two brothers, Ibrahima and Abdul Salaam. Because his father, Saikou, was a businessman, Amadou traveled throughout much of his childhood living in Togo, Guinea, the homeland of his parents, Bangkok and Singapore.

Amadou grew up with a love of reading, music, dancing and sports. Once in the United States, he became an avid basketball fan, in particular, of Michael Jordan. In fact, Amadou was such a true Michael Jordan fan that he shifted from a Bulls fan to a Knicks fan when Jordan had decided to retire.

Amadou had a passion for school and attended some of the finest schools in the world, including The French International School, London's Cambridge University, The British Consulate College in Thailand and the Asian Institute of Microsoft. It was Amadou's dream to one day enroll in school in the United States. At twenty, he decided to come to America to continue his computer education and he wanted to do it on his own. In September of 1996, he decided to come to New York to start a business with his cousin. His father, Saikou, was reluctant at first but later relented after he was reassured by relatives that Amadou would be taken care of.

Upon his arrival in New York, he first worked as a delivery man but later became a street peddler selling gloves, socks and video tapes in Manhattan on 14th Street. He worked six days a week, 12 hours a day. However, his dream to pursue his education in America continued. A young man from Senegal who met Amadou in New York fondly recalls the times he and Amadou would sit talking for hours about school. After class, he'd stop by Amadou's stand where Amadou would always have a cold bottle of apple juice waiting for him. He'd take his usual seat while Amadou would run down his usual questions; "So tell me, how was school in America today? How do you feel about being in the classroom?" He'd get so excited just listening and, at the end of every conversation, he'd say, "You know, I'm really going to go to school here someday."

A spiritual person, when Amadou was about 18 years old, he began to focus and collect books on his religion, studying the Koran and praying five times a day in the Muslim tradition. When the family came to collect Amadou's belongings after his death, they found solace in what they discovered. Among the many things they found were writings where Amadou had begun to research the prophets. He had written the names of all the prophets along with the dates of their birth. He had highlighted passages in the Koran that spoke about the dialogues between Christians and Muslims. Amadou was on a spiritual journey.

Amadou was killed on February 4, 1999, after midnight, by four New York City police officers from the Street Crime Unit. Amadou had come home from work to his apartment at 1157 Wheeler Avenue in the Soundview Section of the Bronx and decided to go back out to get something to eat. Upon his return, he encountered the police officers who ultimately fired a fuselage of 41 shots, 19 of which riddled his body. Amadou died in the vestibule of his apartment building.

**Steve Mercado**

The following biographical information was provided by Community Board 9 in the Bronx and the Office of the Bronx Borough President.

Steve Mercado was born on June 1, 1963 and grew up playing stickball on the streets of The Bronx. He was widely known for his efforts to preserve and promote stickball as a healthy and accessible sport. From a young player on Bronx streets, he became a nationally recognized leader and organizer, establishing leagues in the Bronx, across the City and across the Country, including Miami, San Diego and Puerto Rico. Steve Mercado was a very civically active member of Community Board 9 who volunteered a great deal of his time to The Bronx YMCA as a coach. He also served as the President of the Emperors Stickball League which plays every weekend from March until August on Stickball Boulevard.

Steve Mercado became a New York City Firefighter on October 21, 1990 and received a unit citation on October 24, 1996. His commitment to the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) was every bit as intense as his commitment to stickball. Assigned to Engine Company 40 on Manhattan’s West Side, Steve was called to the World Trade Center in answer to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. He died on that day along with 342 other members of FDNY. Steve Mercado was thirty-eight years old. He left a widow, Jovianna, and two sons, Sklyer, 6, and Austin, 2.

**Bobby Bello**

The following biographical information was provided by the Bello family.

Bobby Bello was born and raised in Bay Ridge. The youngest of nine children, he was born on June 4, 1927 to Tony and Netti Bello. He attended P.S. 105, Pershing Junior High School and graduated from Fort Hamilton High School in 1945. After high school he served in the Air Force for two years. Bobby was a member of the Local #40 Iron Works union for the next forty years. He worked on various projects in the New York City area, among them the Twin Towers and the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. This brought him a sense of great pride and joy, especially when connecting his beloved Bay Ridge with his new home Staten Island.

In 1952 at a Father Strype fund raising dance Bob met and later fell in love with Margaret Moakler. Two years later on October 16, 1954 in the upper church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bob and Margie were married by her brother Father Michael Moakler. Together they had five children, Bonnie, Robert, Phillip, Stephen, and Toniann.

In 1973, Bob was laid up suffering from a back injury. At that time he encouraged Maggie to go to college. Four years later she graduated with honors from Richmond College. Later, again with his encouragement, she would also acquire her Masters Degree from Saint John’s University. In the year 2000 she retired from Saint Patrick’s School after teaching the second grade for twenty years.

Bob’s chosen sport was football. As a little boy on 7th avenue and 59th street, his dream was to be a good football player. He’d often reminiscence about his days at the “Dust Bowl” field. How he took old newspapers, rolled them together tightly, wrapped them with string or rubber bands and call that his football. He would take his “ball” to the Dust Bowl, throw the ball down the field, run back and catch it. Bob would be there for hours learning to “run and catch”. Since Fort Hamilton did not have a football team, Bob played with the local sand lot teams, such as The Hawks, The Imps, and the Bay Ridge Celtics where he was both a player and a coach. One year he played semi-pro football for the Indians. The last game he played was on his endeared Shore Road Football field, he was 38 years old.

Bob’s coaching abilities were becoming well known in Bay Ridge. In 1955, Bob, together with the youth officer Ray Rupelli, of the 64th precinct located then on the corner of 86th street and 5th avenue, began the “Police Athletic League” (P.A.L.), which till this day still flourishes under the title of 68th precinct Youth Council. At the time he was also coaching in the Pop Warner Football League. The games were played on their home field at Shore Road and 79th street. Ironically enough, this field at 79th street and Shore Road is now the home field of the Xaverian Clippers Football team which is coached by Dom Laurendi, who was one of Bob’s early ball players. He coached and nurtured thousands of young boys through out those years, and one outstanding young man was the New York Jets John Dockery. Over the years John never forgot his “coach,” Bobby Bello. Later, Bob opened a sporting goods store on 77th street and 5th avenue and many of his “kids”, now mature young men, would stop by to recall the good times they had with the P.A.L. John Dockery was one of these “kids.” Bob was proud to know that his Bay Ridge local boy had won an athletic scholarship to Harvard University. Dockery also won a Superbowl Ring with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Shortly afterwards, Joe Namath and Dockery joined forces and began the “Joe Namath and John Dockery Football Camp”. Bob was one of the first coaches to join the camp. Further more, he was a part of that camp up to the time of his death, some 27 years in all.

Bob’s world of coaching took him down many paths and to many fields as he coached New York Police Department Football teams, numerous high school teams such as, Tilden, Monsignor Farrell, and Tottenville High School. In 1992 the New York Finest were the champs in the Policeman’s Benevolent Association Fun City Bowl in Florida, and in 1997, the Tottenville “pirates” were the New York City P.S.A.L. Champions. On both Occasions he received a ring in his name, a dream come true. He was very proud of these rings and “His” boys. With all the devotion and hard work that he gave to his coaching, one would think that coaching was his first love. But this was not the case.

Bobby Bello’s first and heartfelt love belonged to his family. His wife Margie, their five children, eight grandchildren, his brothers and sisters, and their children. He felt proud to have coached his sons Robert, Phillip, and Stephen, his nephews Michael, Robert, Joseph, and later his son Joseph the III, and then his grandsons Robert and Sean. This for Bob was a joyful accomplishment. Bobby Bello’s football days started alone on the “Dust Bowl” field, but his accomplishments, his achievements, and his adulation began on the fields of Shore Road. Bobby Bello died on February 16, 1999.

Bobby was not only a great football player and coach, but he was an exceptional, outstanding and magnificent man. A man whose name will give honor and due respect to this field.

**Jonathan Nigro**

The following biographical material was provided by the Nigro family.

Jonathan Nigro was born on September 8, 1973 at 1677 West 2nd Street in Brooklyn, His parents and grandparents before him had lived at 1677 West 2nd Street, since 1938.

Jonathan attended P.S. 177 on West 1st Street and Avenue P, and Mark Twain Junior High School, Lafayette High Sschool and Saint Francis College, attaining his Bachelors of Business Administration. He was in the process of obtaining his Masters in Business Administration when he was stricken with Leukemia, halting his aspirations, his dreams and his life.

Jonathan’s days were spent playing on the sidewalks and Streets in and around West 2nd Street. He rode his bicycle, skated, ran, jumped and played ball. He charmed the neighbors from his birth, his smile and warm hello filled their days. Jonathan was also a lifeguard and an all around athlete. During his 8th grade year at Mark Twain JHS, while on a school trip, he saved the life of another swimmer at the Olympic Dude Ranch. He received the Borough President’s Golden Citizen’s Award and won awards at his Graduation from Mark Twain for his Humanity and Citizenship. At Lafayette High School, he was on the Football and Baseball teams. He had many friends, both students and teachers alike.

During his years at Saint Francis College, he learned how to ski and became an avid skier. He graduated with a Bachelors of Business Administration, which helped him as an Asset Trader at Fidelity.

Jonathan Nigro died of Leukemia on May 3, 2000. He left a legacy of love, loyalty, friendship and good citizenship. He was a loving and loyal son, brother, grandson, nephew, and friend to the young and old. Children adored him, with is playful grin and his daring personality. Almost 4,000 people attended funeral services honoring Jonathan, which was an attestation to the legacy of love and loyalty that he left behind. He will be missed forever.

Jonathan was survived by his beloved fiancé, Melissa Murphy, sister, Jennifer and her husband Joseph Cianciotta, parents, Ron and Ella, grandmother Jenny, and his Aunt Faye, Uncle Tony, and cousin Jaclyn, of West 2nd Street, as well, and many other family members and friends. Because of Jonathan’s sickness and the love he generated, almost 1,000 people were registered as Bone Marrow Donors and are presently on the list for Bone Marrow Transplantation. Monies were raised for Leukemia and a Leukemia Fund is in the process of being established at North Shore Hospital, benefiting the Bone Marrow Transplant Room. A scholarship was established in Jonathan’s name at Saint Francis College, which will address Bio-Medical Students entering research in the Medical Research Field.

**Captain Patrick J. Brown**

The following biographical information was provided by New York City Fire Department Press Office.

Captain Patrick J. Brown, age 48, of Ladder Company 3, was a twenty-three year veteran of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). He was one of the most decorated members of FDNY, receiving 20 citations for valor during his career. As a firefighter, Captain Brown served in Ladder Company 26 and Rescue Company 1 in Manhattan, and Rescue Company 2 in Brooklyn. After being promoted to Lieutenant in 1987, he served with Battalion 16 and Ladder Company 28 in The Bronx as well as the Special Operations Command. He was promoted to Captain in 1993 and served with Division 1 in Manhattan and Engine Company 69 in The Bronx, before transferring to Ladder 3 in 2000.

Captain Brown, a resident of Manhattan and also a highly decorated Marine Corps sergeant who served his country in Viet Nam, was called along with his company to the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11, 2001. When the towers collapsed he was killed trying to rescue people who were trapped inside. Captain Brown was a highly respected and very modest man. He didn’t talk about things often, but you knew from he demeanor that he had seen and had done a lot. He was survived by a brother Michael and a sister Caroline.

**Father Michael J. McGivney**

The following biographical information was provided by the Knights of Columbus.

Father Michael McGivney was born in Waterbury on August 12, 1852. The oldest of thirteen children of Irish immigrants Patrick and Mary (Lynch) McGivney, Michael learned early about sorrow, the harsh grip of poverty, love and faith, and family fortitude. Six of his siblings died in infancy or childhood. At the age of 13 he left school to work in a spoon-making department of a brass factory to provide a few more dollars for family survival. When he reached the age of sixteen, he traveled to Quebec, Canada with his Waterbury pastor and registered at the French-run College of St. Hyacinthe. With the priesthood clearly in mind, he worked hard on subjects that would prepare him to apply for seminary admission. He studied two additional years at Our Lady of Angels Seminary in Niagra Falls, New York. He then moved to Montreal to attend seminary classes at the Jesuit-run St. Mary's College.

When his father died in June of 1873, he went home for the funeral concerned for his family's welfare, lingering awhile in Waterbury. Then, at the request of the bishop of Hartford, he entered St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. On December 22, 1877, he was ordained in Baltimore's historic Cathedral of the Assumption by Archbishop (later Cardinal) James Gibbons. A few days later, he said his first Mass at Immaculate Conception Church in Waterbury. Father McGivney began his priestly ministry on Christmas Day in 1877 as curate at St. Mary's Church in New Haven. It was the city's first parish. A new stone church had been built, after the old one burned, on one of New Haven's finest residential Streets, Hillhouse Avenue. There was neighborhood objection which even the New York Times noted in 1879, under the headline: "How An Aristocratic Avenue Was Blemished By A Roman Church Edifice." So Father McGivney's priestly ministry in New Haven began with tension and defensiveness among the working-class Irish families he served.

Father McGivney worked closely with the young people of St. Mary's parish, holding catechism classes and organizing a total abstinence society to fight alcoholism. In 1881 he began to explore with various laymen the idea of a Catholic, fraternal benefit society. In an era when parish clubs and fraternal societies had wide popular appeal, the young priest felt there should be some way to strengthen religious faith and at the same time provide for the financial needs of families overwhelmed by illness or death of the breadwinner. He discussed this concept with Bishop Lawrence McMahon of Hartford, and received his approval. He traveled to Boston to talk with the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters, and traveled to Brooklyn to consult the Catholic Benevolent Legion. He met with other priests of the diocese. Wherever he could, he sought information that would help the Catholic laymen to organize themselves into a benefit society.

William Geary, one of the Order's charter members, said that at the first council meeting in 1882, he was "acclaimed as founder by 24 men with hearts full of joy and thanksgiving, recognizing that without his optimism, his will to succeed, his counsel and advice they would have failed." Father McGivney had suggested Sons of Columbus as a name for the Order. This would bind Catholicism and Americanism together through the faith and bold vision of the New World's discoverer.

The word "knights" replaced "sons" because key members of the organizing group who were Irish-born Civil War veterans felt it would help to apply a noble ritual in support of the emerging cause of Catholic civil liberty. In the first public reference to the Order on February 8, 1882, the New Haven Morning Journal and Courier said the Knights of Columbus' initial meeting had been held the night before. On March 29, the Connecticut legislature granted a charter to the Knights of Columbus, formally establishing it as a legal corporation. The Order's principles in 1882 were "Unity" and "Charity." The concepts of "Fraternity" and "Patriotism" were added later. Each of these ideals played a major role in ceremonials from the beginning. The Columbus-linked themes, says historian Christopher J. Kauffman, "reverberated with pride in the American promise of liberty, equality and opportunity."

In April of 1882, Father McGivney, with the permission of Bishop McMahon, wrote to all the pastors of the Diocese of Hartford. The Order's primary objective, he wrote, was to dissuade Catholics from joining secret societies by providing them better advantages at times of death or sickness. He urged each pastor to exert influence "in the formation of a Council in your parish." Father McGivney personally installed the first officers of San Salvador Council No. 1 in New Haven, in May of 1882.

By May 1883, Council No. 2 had been instituted in Meriden, Connecticut and Bishop McMahon, so impressed with the organization, became a member of Council No. 11 in 1884, and served it as council chaplain. By the end of 1885, there were 31 councils in Connecticut.

Father McGivney's dedication to the Order was evidenced in trips he made to all parts of Connecticut and in handwritten correspondence—little of which survives—about K of C business. At St. Mary's, despite all this, he remained the energetic curate with constant concern for every parishioner's problems. Then in November of 1884, he was named pastor of St. Thomas Church in Thomaston, Connecticut, a factory town 10 miles from his hometown. It was a factory parish, heavily in debt, serving working-class parishioners with few resources beyond their faith. With prayerful acceptance, Father McGivney put his seven years at St. Mary's behind him.

His New Haven parishioners, in a testimonial resolution elaborately superimposed on the drawing of a chalice and host, declared that despite burdens and afflictions, his courtesy, his kindness and the purity of his life had "secured the love and confidence of the people of St. Mary's, which will follow him in every future field of labor."

In six subsequent years at St. Thomas, he wrestled with the church debt and built the same close ties of devotion and charitable concern he had developed in New Haven. He continued, as well, to serve as supreme chaplain, personally involved in helping the Order to extend its membership into Rhode Island. Later, from 1901 to 1939, his younger brothers, Msgrs. Patrick and John J. McGivney, served the Order as supreme chaplains.

Never robust in health, Father McGivney was suddenly stricken with a serious case of pneumonia in January 1890. It hung on. Various treatments for consumptive illness were tried, but his decline persisted. The young priest lost physical strength just as the Order he founded was moving toward new vitality. On August 14, 1890, Father Michael J. McGivney died at the age of 38. In his 13 brief, busy years as a priest, Father McGivney's piety and compassion had won the love of those he served as curate and pastor. His Christian inspiration, leadership and administrative drive had brought him the loyalty and affection of thousands who knew him as the founder of the Knights of Columbus.

# Bill Thomas, Sr. Lane

The following biographical material was provided by Alfred P. Raffo, a colleague and family friend.

William D. Thomas Senior was born on June 8, 1933, on Gold Street in Brooklyn, New York, to David and Helen Thomas. As a young man his family, which consisted of his parents, a sister, Ester and brothers David and Kenneth, moved to 19th Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, in Brooklyn. “Bill” attended Public School 10 graduating in1945. At age 19 he married Angela LaDuca Thomas, on September 26, 1952. The marriage produced two sons, David and William Junior.

Bill Thomas’ first job was with Caputo Bakeries on Court Street. He later worked as a route man, salesman and driver for Drakes Cakes Company, Inc. In 1962 Bill and Angela purchased a brownstone home at 459 14th Street. Ten years later, in 1972, he founded the 14th Street Block Association and remained its president for the rest of his life. During this period he became a very active, and a very hands-on, community leader and activist. He was elected to be a Judicial Delegate for the Kings County Democratic Party and, in 1985, was asked to become Chairman of the Board of the 17th Street Block Association, a tenants advocate organization which he helped to found. In February 1990, Mr. Thomas was a founding member of the United Coalition to Save and Preserve the 14th Infantry Regiment Armory Conservancy Inc., an organization that he chaired from 1996 to 1998. Bill also served as Campaign Treasurer for the Honorable Bernard Fuchs’ election to the Supreme Court of the State of New York in 1986 and 1992.

In 1996, Bill Thomas, along with his good friend and colleague Alfred P. Raffo and others, fought side by side for the return of “Iron Mike”, a WWI Statue of a 14th Infantry Regiment “Doughboy”, to its traditional pedestal in front of the Armory’s main entrance. Later in 1996, he worked with Department of Transportation (DOT) officers to have a traffic light installed, at the corner of 14th Street and Eighth Avenue to protect local residents. He also worked with DOT, up until his death, to bring about extensive structural repairs for 14th Street. Bill, and others, also worked with the Department of Parks and Recreation to create a parking lot in Prospect Park. The lot would benefit patrons of the Circle Restaurant and the Pavilion Theatre, with parking fees going to local non-profit community organizations. And from 1984, Bill Thomas was member of the Board of Directors of the Seventh Avenue/Windsor Place Community Association and of Foodcare, Inc. Foodcare, Inc. is a not-for-profit entity, made up of 68 community organizations, who operate soup kitchens, food pantries and other charitable activities 365 days a year.

William D. Thomas, Sr. died on February 16, 2002. He was survived by his wife, Angela, his sister, Ester; and two sons, William Jr. and David.

## Frank P. LoCicero

The following biographical information was provided by the Bellerose Hillside Civic Association.

Frank P. LoCicero was born on February 22nd, 1998 in Manhattan. He graduated from Harran High School where he studied art. He became, at age 17, the youngest person to have a sculpture exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. After graduating high school he attended a commercial art school and soon began to work as an artist at Norcross Greeting Cards. During World War II, Frank enlisted in the Army where he spent the next five years of his life in Hawaii drawing aerial maps.

After leaving the army, he went back to work for Norcross and soon met his wife to be, Marie. They were married on November 9, 1946. Frank and Marie had two sons, Ronnie and Ricky. In 1950, they purchased a home in Bellerose, New York Soon after arriving, Frank became active at St. Gregory the Great Church, joining the Holy Name Society and Nocturnal Adoration Association. He also became a member of the Bellerose Hillside Civic Association. He enjoyed his civic activities and was later voted its president. During his tenure as president, Frank led successful campaigns against undesirable projects that were proposed to be situated at the Creedmore Psychiatric Center such as a prison and a sanitation garage. He also was responsible for editing and distributing a monthly newsletter. In addition to all his civic activities, he became the grandfather of 5 and great-grandfather of 4.

Frank passed away on November 5, 1997. After his death the officers and members of the Bellerose - Hillside Civic Association arranged with New York City’s Project GreenStreets to have a triangle located at Hillside Avenue and the Cross Island Parkway replanted. A permanent memorial stone was installed there as a lasting tribute to a man who gave much to help preserve the neighborhood he loved. The Street sign will be located at this triangle.

### Osvaldo Vega

The following biographical information was provided by Edwin Marrero a friend of the Vega family.

Osvaldo Vega was born in Lajas, Puerto Rico on April 29, 1921. He was the eldest of three sons born to Mrs. Lila Rodriguez de Vega and Mr. Emiliano Vega.

In 1937, at age 16, Osvaldo arrived in New York, where he continued his education. He graduated from Benjamin Franklin High School, and attended New York University and Georgetown School of Social Science. After he finished his studies, he enlisted in the United States Navy, where he was in the same company as future President John. F. Kennedy. While he was in the service, Osvaldo was chosen by his superior officers to be a member of a Senatorial committee that was sent to Germany to investigate the conditions of Hispanic soldiers.

Upon his discharge from the Navy, he met with a group of distinguished athletes concerned about the future of our children. They founded the Puerto Rican Hispanic Sports Council (PRHSC). Mr. Osvaldo Vega was named president – a post he held for 30 years until his death. During those 30 years, Osvaldo Vega was dedicated to working for a better future for our children and the community in general.

He organized many programs and successfully celebrated them to the benefit of our children and our community. He also organized sports meets in all fields during the months of July and August, in which children of all national backgrounds participated. It also included the Puerto Rican marathon, held every year, in which up to three thousand runners participate, making it New York’s second largest marathon race.

Mr. Vega was also involved in baseball clinics that took place every year at City College, under the aegis of PRHSC. Major League scouts participated in these clinics teaching children good baseball technique. He also coordinated baseball umpires training courses every year at City College, lasting six weeks. These graduating umpires would then serve the little leagues. In addition, he was the inspiration for Latin American Day at Yankee and Shea Stadiums, where every year Latin players in the Major Leagues received deserving recognition.

During his lifetime Mr. Vega received awards in recognition of his work from the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, Federacion Liqa Hispana, Federacion International De Deportes Aficianado, the Toleto Vargas League, the Canalles League, the Roberto Clemente Hall of fame, the United States Little League Federation, the Puertorrigueno /Puerto Rican Parade, Fiesta Folklouca, and Mayor Abraham Beame. Osvaldo Vega died in December 1983.

### Robert Rodriguez

The following biographical material was provided by the Rodriguez family.

Robert Rodriguez was born in East Harlem on August 1, 1951. He was the third of seven children born to Juan and Carmen Rodriguez. Robert attended Public School 72 and Junior High School 13, in East Harlem, before graduating from Alfred E. Smith High School in 1969. After High School, Robert attended Nyack Missionary College. Soon after college, he met and fell in love with Edith Delerme and they were married on June 9, 1974. The marriage produced two sons, Robert Jay, and Jonathan Ray, and one daughter, Tina Rasheen.

During the early 70’s Robert served as Manpower Director for the East Harlem Community Corporation. In this capacity he was able to find employment for hundreds of workers. Because he believed that access to jobs determines the quality of our lives, he drew great satisfaction from his role in employee placement. Early on, Robert Rodriguez became very active in the civic life of his community. He was elected to the Board of Community School District #4, in 1973 and again in 1982, serving for a time as its president. During this period he was directly responsible for the initiation of many after school programs for young people at junior high school 45. He was a member of the Advisory Board of Metropolitan Hospital from 1973 until 1977. Robert also served as Chairman of the Community Mental Health Center (1973-1977), as Democratic District Leader of the 68th Assembly District (1973-1977), as a member of Community Planning Board #11 in East Harlem (1973-1976), as a Board Member of the Edwin Gould Services for Children Foundation (1977-1982), as a Board Member of the East Harlem Boy Scouts of America (1977-1986), and as a member of the Hunts Point Lions Club (1976-1883).

In 1976, Robert Rodriguez was elected to represent the 8th Councilmanic District of the City of New York. His constituency included the South Bronx, portions of the Upper East Side and East Harlem. At the time of his election, Robert was the youngest person ever elected to the Council. He was elected a second time in 1980 and served until 1982 before leaving to serve as Director of Labor Relations at the New York City Fire Department. In 1978, while still at the Council, Robert founded the East Harlem Multiservice Center (EHMC) on 120th Street between First Avenue and Pleasant Avenue. He was especially proud of this achievement and EHMC remains a cornerstore of the East Harlem community helping thousands of families each year.

Robert Rodriguez left the Fire Department in 1984 and was Vice-President of Marketing and Development for Delgado-Huegel Architects for two years before becoming chief of staff for Assemblyman Jose Serrano. He later served as Vice President for Operations and Public Affairs for SCS Business Technical Institute and was a Special Projects Director for the New York State Hispanic Housing and Economic Development Task Force. At the time of his death, Robert Rodriguez was over-seeing affirmative-action and diversity programs at the New York State Department of Civil Service. Robert Died on July 17, 1994. He was survived by his wife Edith; two sons, Robert Jay and Jonathan Ray; one daughter, Tina Rasheen; his parents, Carmen and Juan; five brothers Raul, Rene, Richard, and Juan Jr.; and one sister, Norma.

### Christopher J. Pickford

The following biographical material was provided by the Pickford Family.

Christopher J. Pickford was born on Father’s Day, June 15, 1969, in, what was then, Booth Memorial Hospital in Flushing. Hew grew up in Kew Gardens in the home in which his parents, Thomas and Linda still reside. He attended Public School 90, Junior High School 226, Forest Hills High School and Queens Borough Community College.

Beginning with his early years in grammar school, Chris was awarded honors in creative writing and music. These gifts remained his passion into his adult life. He was an accomplished guitarist and song writer and used these talents in several bands throughout the years. The first band was “Riboflavin and the Vitamin D’s” – a band formed in high school mostly just for fun, but soon gained a cult following throughout Queens for its witty lyrics and ridiculous stage presence. As he matured, his music did as well. He formed the band “10 Degree Lean”, appearing regularly in Manhattan’s East Village. He continued to write poetry and screen plays and began laying down tracks for an acoustical guitar Cd.

Chris worked for the Queens District Attorneys as a paralegal before being hired as a New York City Firefighter in January, 2000. He was assigned to Ladder Company 136 in Queens and was on a rotation to Engine Company 201 in Brooklyn. On September 1, 2001 Engine Company 201 was called to the World Trade Center in response to the terrorists attacks. Chris was killed along with 342 other firefighters as he helped to evacuate people who were trapped in the towers.