

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FALLEN FDNY HEROES



PLEDGE OF HONOR: Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta and Mayor Bloomberg swear in probationary firefighters Joseph Cammarata, Brian Stack and Timothy Riches (left to right), who all lost a relative in the Sept. 11 attacks. N.Y. Post: Jim Alcorn

By DAVID SEIFMAN
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Mayor Bloomberg swore in 305 additional probationary firefighters yesterday in an emotional ceremony that included four relatives of fallen World Trade Center heroes.

One of the "probies" — 24-year-old Joseph Cammarata — is following a brother who was one of the youngest firefighter fatalities that horrible day in September.

"I'm going to complete the mission," declared Cammarata, whose brother, Michael, was just 22 when his lower Manhattan ladder company was engulfed in the trade center collapse.

"I feel that my brother, in my eyes, is the bravest — and I want to be just like my brother. I want to be the bravest, too."

Despite looming budget cuts, Bloomberg promised that the recruits



MIKE CAMMARATA
Fallen Ladder 11 hero.

would enjoy "the best training, the best facilities and the best equipment that man knows how to provide today."

But he didn't downplay the risk inherent in fighting fires — and possibly terrorists.

"You've accepted fundamentally a dangerous job," the mayor told them.

The firefighters will receive about 25 weeks of training, with two days devoted to a special anti-terrorist course devel-



LAWRENCE STACK
Son will honor memory.

oped by the Justice Department.

The Fire Department lost 343 men — including 89 superior officers with "4,400 years of collective experience" as Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta put it — on Sept. 11.

Spokesman Frank Gribbon said this class, the second to begin training since the attacks, will bring the department back to its authorized strength of about 11,400.

Three of the recruits —



JAMES RICHES
Brother now Bravest.

Joseph Pansini, Timothy Riches and Cammarata — are the brothers of fallen firefighters.

A fourth recruit, Brian Stack, 30, lost his father, battalion Chief Larry Stack.

"We always wanted this, me and my father," Stack, a former correction officer, said after being sworn in at the Fire Department's academy on Randalls Island.

Pansini, 28, gave up a career as an NYPD cop to

follow his firefighter brother, Paul.

"It was bittersweet," Pansini said. "It was one of the happiest days of my life. I wish he was here with me in person but he's in my heart."

Cammarata said his brother's colleagues at Ladder 11 have been visiting regularly to help his family cope.

But he said his decision to become a firefighter was made years ago, not in response to his brother's tragic death.

"You can't replace a hero," he said. "They're born from Day 1. They're not made."

Still, it was clear that Cammarata remains joined to his younger brother.

"The thought that my brother walked these halls, ran on these fields, trained in these buildings and studied these notes is all going to inspire me," he said.