

Scholarships will keep firefighter's spirit alive

Cammarata's family endows Staten Island Sports Hall of Fame's annual awards

None of this should be happening. When the Class of 2002 goes into the Staten Island Sports Hall of Fame next month, nobody should have to get up and announce that from now on, the Hall of Fame scholarships will be given in memory of Firefighter Michael Cammarata, while the dead fireman's family and the guys from Ladder 11 sit in the front row, biting their

lips the way they did the night his legacy was honored in front of 40,000 people at the Little League World Series. The

way they have at a dozen memorials, or a hundred; because, hey, who keeps track anymore?

The kid — he was 22, the youngest New York City firefighter to die in the line of duty — never should've been there the day the hijackers flew the planes into the buildings. And not just because he was too young or too caring, the kind of kid who remembered to be good to his grandmother; because there was plenty of that going around last Sept.



JAY PRICE

11.

But besides being a good kid, Cammarata had an excuse. He should've been off-duty that morning, trying out for the Fire Department hockey team.

He didn't miss the first day of workouts because he was shy about trying out, or nervous about making the team. Heck, he'd been "playing up" most of his life.

PLAYED WITH MARQUIS

Wasn't he the one who volunteered to catch the Little League pitcher who threw so hard he knocked the mitt off Mike's hand? Wasn't he the hockey player who made it to Williamsport in his second sport, on the same team with Jason Marquis, who cracked the Atlanta Braves' pitching staff about the same time Cammarata made it to the big leagues at Ladder 11?

Wasn't he the one who scored a perfect 105 on the firefighter's test?

The Face (how many kids could've handled a nickname like that without getting a big head?) was playing

for the high school hockey club when he was in eighth grade. He was the first defenseman to lead the league in scoring, a Rookie of the Year and MVP for Wagner College's club squad. If the firemen knew what they were getting, the hockey team would've sent a car.

And you know he didn't miss the first day of tryouts because he forgot. Cammarata organized his life the way some people organize their closets.

SEE PRICE, PAGE C 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMMARATA FAMILY

Michael Cammarata was rookie of the year and MVP for Wagner College's club ice hockey team. The Staten Island Sports Hall of Fame scholarships will be given in his memory.

HALL OF FAME CEREMONY SET FOR NOV. 23

Page C 4