

Login Get News Updates Profile Subscriptions Mobile Tablet

Times Newsweekly.com

Established in 1908 as
Ridgewood Times

Serving Queens And Brooklyn

Feature Stories

October 20, 2011

Search Archives

Search



100th Anniversary Issue News

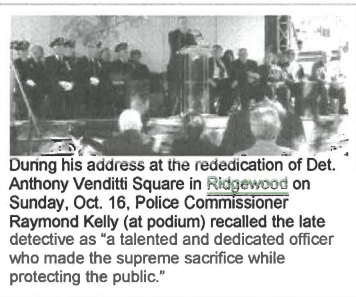
- Front Page
- Feature Stories
- Local News
- Crimes & Cases
- Political
- Sports
- Schools
- Obituaries
- Op-Ed
- Editorial
- Columns
- People & Culture
- Photo Gallery
- Arts & Leisure
- Births & Weddings
- Links
- About Us
- Editorial Department
- Advertising/Sales
- View Classifieds
- Post A Classified
- Subscriptions
- Webmaster
- History
- Archive

Our Hometown
Newspaper web site content management software and services

DMCA Notices

Recalling A Detective's Ultimate Sacrifice

Rededicated Ridgewood Square Keeps Det. Anthony J. Venditti's Spirit Alive
story and photos by Robert Pozarycki



During his address at the rededication of Det. Anthony Venditti Square in Ridgewood on Sunday, Oct. 16, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly (at podium) recalled the late detective as "a talented and dedicated officer who made the supreme sacrifice while protecting the public."

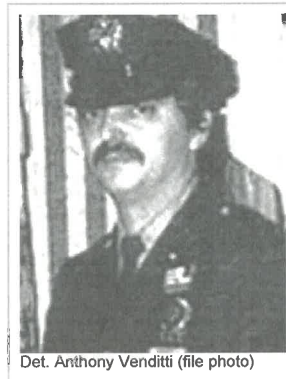
More than 25 years after his murder at the Ridgewood location later transformed into a public square bearing his name, Det. Anthony J. Venditti and his service to the city were celebrated by Police Department brass, community leaders and family members during the rededication of Venditti Square on Sunday morning, Oct. 16.

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly joined members of the Venditti family at the ceremony organized by the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) and the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation (RLDC) in paying

tribute to the detective who was gunned down at the corner of Myrtle and St. Nicholas avenues on the night of Jan. 21, 1986 while investigating a local mobster.

Sunday's ceremony not only marked a grim milestone but also celebrated both Venditti's career in public service and recent renovations to Venditti Square, which encompasses the confluence of Myrtle Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue and Woodbine Street. The public plaza—first dedicated to the fallen officer upon its opening in 1989—includes new paving stones, benches and plants and was renovated through several improvement projects funded by local elected officials and agencies.

Joining Commissioner Kelly at the ceremony were other ranking members of the NYPD, including Chief of Department Joseph Esposito, Chief Anthony Izzo of the Organized Crime Control Bureau, Assistant Chief Diana Pizzuti and Deputy Chief Patrick Conry of Patrol Borough Queens North, Inspector Brian O'Neill of the Organized Crime Unit and Capt. Michael Cody, commander of the 104th Precinct.



Det. Anthony Venditti (file photo)

Also on hand were Michael Palladino, president of the Detectives Endowment Association, City Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, former

State Sen. Serphin Maltese, Msgr. James Kelly of St. Brigid Church, MTA Police Department Chaplain Rabbi Harry Berkowitz, retired NYPD Senior Chaplain Rev. William Kalaidjian, Community Board 5 Chairperson Vincent Arcuri and District Manager Gary Giordano, Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement



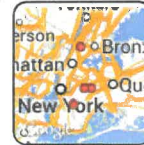
Members of the 104th Precinct and its Auxiliary Unit salute during the national anthem sung at Sunday's rededication of Det. Anthony Venditti Square in Ridgewood.

District President Herman Hochberg and representatives of Rep. Nydia Velazquez, Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, Assemblyman Mike Miller, and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit.

Several law enforcement groups were also represented at the rededication ceremony, including

Share / Save

Where's the story?



5 Points Mentioned

ADVERTISEMENTS FROM ISSUE APRIL 16, 2014

<p>REGULAR TAX</p> <p>INCORP. TAX</p> <p>PAIDMENTS</p> <p>PAIDMENTS</p> <p>PAIDMENTS</p>	<p>WET CHIPPING</p> <p>WET CHIPPING</p> <p>WET CHIPPING</p>	<p>YOUR AD SHOULD BE HERE!</p> <p>YOUR AD SHOULD BE HERE!</p> <p>YOUR AD SHOULD BE HERE!</p>
<p>1.877.TAX.1040</p> <p>1.877.TAX.1040</p> <p>1.877.TAX.1040</p>	<p>Energy efficiency</p> <p>Energy efficiency</p> <p>Energy efficiency</p>	<p>ADVERTISEMENTS FROM ISSUE APRIL 16, 2014</p> <p>ADVERTISEMENTS FROM ISSUE APRIL 16, 2014</p>

ADVERTISEMENTS FROM ISSUE APRIL 16, 2014

<p>Professional Construction</p> <p>Professional Construction</p>	<p>Water Carpentry</p> <p>Water Carpentry</p>
<p>AJ ROOFING</p> <p>AJ ROOFING</p>	<p>PRO ROOFING</p> <p>PRO ROOFING</p>
<p>SLIGO Clean Outs</p> <p>SLIGO Clean Outs</p>	<p>MULE & SON</p> <p>MULE & SON</p>

ADVERTISEMENTS FROM ISSUE APRIL 16, 2014

<p>CRIFAST</p> <p>CRIFAST</p>	<p>CRIFAST</p> <p>CRIFAST</p>
<p>CRIFAST</p> <p>CRIFAST</p>	<p>CRIFAST</p> <p>CRIFAST</p>

the Glendale/ 104th Precinct Civilian Observation Patrol, the NYPD Columbia Association and the Blue Knights of New York Chapter 2, an organization of motorcycle enthusiasts in the law enforcement community. Venditti was one of the founding members of the chapter.

A just man's sacrifice

Paul Kerzner, president of the RLDC, cited from the Book of Ecclesiastes in his opening remarks in describing Detective Venditti as "a just man who perished in the line of duty, protecting the residents of this community from those who are wicked."



Patricia Venditti, widow of the late Det. Anthony Venditti (left photo) and Assistant Chief Diana Pizzuti of Patrol Borough Queens North (right photo) placed carnations on the plaque remembering the fallen detective's life at last Sunday's ceremony.



Prior to becoming a police officer, Venditti joined the NYPD as a trainee and a switchboard operator. He distinguished himself early on, Commissioner Kelly noted, as he worked to save the life of a suicidal woman in Brooklyn who had called police after taking a large quantity of sleeping pills.

Venditti kept the woman on the line and obtained information regarding her whereabouts, allowing police and paramedics to come to her aid and save

her life, Kelly said.

"It was an auspicious beginning for what would become a stellar career in the Police Department," he said. In his 14 years with the NYPD, Kelly noted, Venditti received 17 departmental commendations, including its highest citation—the Medal of Honor—which was awarded posthumously.

Venditti graduated from the Police Academy in 1972 and served in the 48th Precinct and the 50th Precinct in the Bronx, then later joined the Public Morals Division. At both commands, he made hundreds of felony arrests on a variety of cases from auto theft to weapons possession, Kelly said.

Upon attaining the rank of detective in 1984 following 12 years of service as a police officer, Venditti was assigned to the Organized Crime Control Bureau. As Commissioner Kelly stated, "his strong work ethic, street smarts and fluency in Italian made him a natural" to investigate cases involving the Mafia.

Detective Venditti and his partner, Det. Karen Burke, were trailing a member of the Genovese crime family— Federico (a.k.a. Fritzy) Giovanelli— at around 8 p.m. on the evening of Jan. 21, 1986; at the time, Giovanelli was under investigation for allegedly operating a gambling ring in the Ridgewood area.

After Giovanelli pulled into a location in the vicinity of Myrtle and St. Nicholas avenues, Venditti entered the now-defunct Castillo's Diner (which is now known as Montas Restaurant). When he walked out moments later, the detective was reportedly confronted by Giovanelli and two associates, who shoved him against a wall.

Sensing that her partner was in trouble, according to published accounts of the event, Detective Burke exited her car and ran to his aid, letting out a warning. Seconds later, the suspects opened fire; Burke was shot in the chest and Venditti was shot twice in the head and twice in the back.

Members of the 104th Precinct and EMS units rushed to the scene. The 34-year-old Venditti succumbed to his injuries; Burke was critically injured but made a recovery.

Giovanelli and his two accomplices— identified as Steven Maltese and Carmine Gualtiere—were arrested a short time after the fatal shooting. Following two trials which ended in hung juries, they were acquitted of second-degree murder charges during the third trial. All three men were later convicted on federal racketeering charges and incarcerated.

Finding his presence

During Detective Venditti's funeral Mass at St. Mel's Church in Flushing, Commissioner Kelly recalled, more than 5,000 police officers turned out to pay their respects. Msgr. John P. McCullagh, the then- NYPD chaplain, told family members in his eulogy that the Police Department would never forget what Venditti did and his sacrifice to the city. "Twenty-five years later, we renew that pledge to his mother, Anna, his wife, Patricia, and his four

daughters," Commissioner Kelly said on Sunday. "Please know that you'll always be a part of the NYPD family and we will never forget his service."

Others at Sunday's ceremony sought to invoke that same spirit to members of the Venditti family that their loss would always be remembered.

"This memorial recalls a great tragedy but also a great man," said Monsignor Kelly in his invocation. "We hope that by sharing with us in this celebration, they will look for him not only in memory but also find his presence" at the square whenever they visit.

"He committed his life to the citizens of the city, and in doing so, paid the ultimate price," Rabbi Berkowitz said. "This rededication keeps his legacy alive for his loved ones and the community he dedicated himself to protecting."

Ted Renz, executive director of the [Myrtle Avenue](#) BID, read a statement from former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who was at the first rededication of Venditti Square in 1995 but was unable to attend Sunday's ceremony. During the 1995 rededication, Giuliani helped local community members dedicate a memorial plaque as well as a clocktower bearing the fallen detective's name.

Giuliani wrote that this second rededication of Venditti Square "keeps his legacy alive for his loved ones and the community that he dedicated his life to protecting. His presence in this square is a fitting tribute to Detective Venditti—for his service and altruism displayed in his short life."

Paschal Venditti, the detective's brother, took the podium on behalf of the family to thank all those who worked to renovate the square and keep Anthony Venditti's memory alive within the community.

"My brother did not leave us; he left us a legacy in my four nieces," he said, joined by Venditti's daughters Traysia, Andrea, Patrice and Kaitlyn. "We wanted to let you all know that this means a great deal to us."

As one final tribute to the officer, family members along with police brass and other dignitaries covered the memorial plaque with 60 carnations, symbolizing that Venditti would have turned 60 years old this year.