

## **9/11 A Decade Later: Staten Island Street Renamed for NYPD Officer Killed by 9/11-Related Illness**

By: Bobby Cuza, NY1 July 14, 2011



*On Thursday, the city honored an NYPD officer believed to have died of a 9/11-related illness, and some community members worry that more of such deaths are to come. NY1's Bobby Cuza filed the following report.*

By all accounts, Michael Morales lived an exemplary life. A 30-year veteran of the New York City Police Department and decorated Vietnam veteran, he was a devoted husband and father, active in his church and community.

His life was cut short by 9/11, though not the attacks themselves, according to his family. Rather, toxic air at the Trade Center site made Morales sick after he spent weeks working for the recovery effort, and he died in 2009.

"He got sick with small cell lung cancer," said Anthony Morales, his son. "And it just happened so aggressively and so fast that the only thing we could have attributed it to was his work at Ground Zero."

Morales was honored with a street renaming Thursday. More than 100 people turned out for the ceremony, including dozens from the NYPD ceremonial unit.

A stretch of Watchogue Road will now be known as Detective Michael Morales Way. The sign stands directly in front of the home where Morales lived for more than 30 years and where he and his wife, Sylvia, raised their four sons.

Morales is also honored at NYPD headquarters in its Hall of Heroes, one of 40 recognized as having died of 9/11-related illness. That's more than the 23 members of the NYPD killed on 9/11 itself.

Morales is not included on the official medical examiner's list of 9/11 homicides, which is the list used to decide which names are included in the 9/11 Memorial. That list is limited to those who were there when the towers collapsed.

However, police officials consider Morales's death in the line of duty.

"As time goes on, more and more of our members are getting sick, feeling the effects of the work that they did on that day and the days and weeks and months that followed," said Joseph Esposito, NYPD chief of department. "We hope that this is the last street renaming we have to do. But reality tells us there will probably be more."

"If it wasn't for what happened on 9/11, I truly believe my father would still be here with us today," said Morales.

[www.ny1.com/content/special\\_reports/911\\_a\\_decade\\_later/142958/9-11-a-decade-later--staten-island-street-renamed-for-nypd-officer-killed-by-9-11-related-illness](http://www.ny1.com/content/special_reports/911_a_decade_later/142958/9-11-a-decade-later--staten-island-street-renamed-for-nypd-officer-killed-by-9-11-related-illness)