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Contact: Steve Aaron, President
SRA Communications
(717) 554-8614
steve@SRACommunications.com

Jeanette Krebs
717-418-6106
jk@krebs.solutions

**DETROIT MAN WHO ATTEMPTED TO SAVE THREE GIRLS FROM DROWNING
RECEIVES FIRST-EVER FLIGHT 93 HEROES AWARD**

*Fire Sergeant Sivad Johnson honored in public ceremony by
Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial*

SOMERSET, PA (Sept. 10, 2021) – The Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial today announced Sivad Johnson has been selected as the first-ever Flight 93 Heroes Award recipient. The announcement was made standing on the Memorial Plaza at Flight 93 National Memorial one day before the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

The Flight 93 Heroes Award was created by the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial to honor the remarkable bravery shown by the 40 passengers and crew members on board Flight 93 and to ensure their story is told to future generations. The award identifies individuals who act with extraordinary heroism; show courage at the risk of one's own personal safety; and who put the physical well-being of someone else above themselves.

Johnson, a Detroit fire department sergeant, was off duty on Aug. 21, 2020 and walking with this daughter when he heard three girls in the Detroit River screaming for help. He immediately jumped into the water. [Johnson died trying to save the girls](#). It is believed he was caught in a rip current. The three girls were rescued by others who also were helping.

“The Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial is honored to present the first Flight 93 Heroes Award to the family of Sivad Johnson,” said Donna Gibson, president of the

Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial. “He truly showed the same courage and split-second decision making that put his life at risk as did those onboard Flight 93. With this recognition today, on the eve of the 20th commemoration of 9/11, we remind all Americans and those around the world about the actions that took place on board Flight 93 and how it forever changed the course of history.”

Johnson’s sister, Eboni Thomas, nominated her brother for the Flight 93 Heroes Award. She said he always put others first and lived his life giving back to the community and investing time in family and loved ones. “He didn’t hesitate when he heard those calls for help,” she said. “He gave his life trying to make sure others were safe. On behalf of my entire family, we want to thank the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial for sharing my brother’s story and connecting it to the brave actions displayed by the 40 heroes of Flight 93.”

Accepting the Flight 93 Heroes Award on behalf of Sivad Johnson were his sister Eboni, brother Jamal, father William and daughter Hayden.

Sivad Johnson is the first recipient of the annual Flight 93 Heroes Award that honors the courageous actions of the passengers and crew members of Flight 93 who thwarted a terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001. Their plane crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pa.

Gibson thanked the selection panel, which included Flight 93 family members as well as representatives from the National Park Service and National Park Foundation, who guided the nominations process for the award.

Emily Schenkel’s godmother, Flight Attendant Lorraine Bay, was on the plane that fateful day. “Sivad Johnson’s story is an inspiration for all of us and I’m so pleased it can be told through the Flight 93 Heroes Award,” Schenkel said. She added that it also helps keep alive the memory of those onboard Flight 93 for future generations.

“More than 75 million people have been born since September 11, 2001 and have no living memory of that day, nor the incredible acts of heroism made by the Flight 93 passengers and crew members,” she said. “People should know about the bravery of my godmother and everyone on that airplane.”

During the recognition ceremony, The Pennsylvania Society, which for more than 120 years has contributed to charitable causes benefiting the state, presented the Johnson family with a contribution in honor of Johnson’s legacy of heroism and selfless sacrifice. PA Society President Edward J. Sheehan, Jr. was in attendance to present the check on behalf of the Society’s thousands of members across Pennsylvania and around the world.

Johnson was chosen for the award from among four finalists. The other three finalists are:

Justin Gavin

On Sept, 9, 2020, Gavin saw a mother and three children in a burning car and jumped into action. He rescued all four before flames completely engulfed the vehicle in Waterbury, Conn.

Read more [here](#).

Terry Ingram

On Jan. 9, 2020, Ingram was photographing eagles in Bellevue, Neb. when he witnessed a car plunge upside down into a freezing pond. He jumped into the icy water and pulled three men out of the vehicle.

Read more [here](#).

Red Tate

On Nov. 27, 2020, Tate saw a truck strike a car, which then went down an embankment in Dekalb County, Ga. Tate pulled a man out of the car. Moments later the vehicle exploded into flames.

Read more [here](#).

More information about the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial can be found by visiting www.Flight93Friends.org. The Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial thanks the [Richard King Mellon Foundation](#) for its generous support that made the Flight 93 Heroes Award possible.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS OF FLIGHT 93 NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Established in 2009, the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial is the official nonprofit partner of Flight 93 National Memorial. The Friends focus on awareness, education, volunteer support, preservation and stewardship to ensure that Flight 93 National Memorial will remain accessible, relevant and inspirational to present and future generations. To learn more about the Friends, or donate to support the Friends, visit www.Flight93Friends.org.

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