Wreath Laying Ceremony
Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Good morning and welcome.

After the year of COVID-19, with all the challenges and personal loss it brought to so many of our friends and family, it is time to resume an event that has deep meaning for thousands of DOCCS employees, as well as deep meaning for me personally. I am speaking of our annual dual ceremonies to remember our fallen co-workers and to salute the heroic acts of current employees.

We begin the day by laying a wreath in honor of those parole officers and correction officers who died in the line of duty. Later this afternoon, we will honor those employees who put themselves in harm's way to protect and rescue others. We will also solemnly recite the names of all the men and women who have died while in DOCCS service, due to extraordinary circumstances.

That list is especially poignant this year since it includes the names of the eleven staff who died 50 years ago this month during the Attica uprising, as well as the names of the thirty-two others, who lost their lives in the line of duty dating all the way back to 1861.

This morning, we pay tribute to those men and women whose names are inscribed on these memorials to ensure they are never forgotten. By all of us remembering and honoring them, we ourselves are reminded of the risks and dangers that are inherent in a corrections and community supervision career.

In just a moment, representatives of PEF, NYSCOPBA, Council 82, and DOCCS will place wreaths at the memorials erected in honor of our fallen. These wreaths are symbols of our heartfelt appreciation for their service and for their sacrifice.

And this afternoon, during the Medals Ceremony, as we celebrate four officers who put their lives on the line to ensure the safety of others, we will also share with them our appreciation for, and pride in, their actions.

I am deeply grateful to all of you for your presence here this morning, and I look forward to seeing you this afternoon at the Medals Ceremony.

Thank you.