

## A Message From Your President

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***"Don't forget Where You Put Your PARA-phernalia."***



We lead off our Fall newsletter with lots of big news for our PARA members.

We will plunge right in with the announcement that the PARA Board will be launching a whole new website for our members in the first quarter of 2023. This is the first time our website, [www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org), has changed since retiree Joe SanSevero, PARA's amazing volunteer webmaster, created it in 2006. See the article beginning on Page 2 for much more detail about how the PARA website project will enhance services for members.

The next news is that PARA will be raising annual dues to \$20, the first increase in 11 years. PARA runs on an all-volunteer basis with no paid staff, but it should come as no surprise that costs for essential services and administration all have increased over the past decade. The website project also involves a significant initial investment and ongoing support to keep it user-friendly and up to date – with Joe SanSevero's continuing volunteer oversight.

Please remember to remit your 2023 dues in the envelope enclosed with this issue. Be sure to include your current postal and email addresses.

PARA's board expects this will be the last year that members' only option for dues payment will be by sending traditional paper checks mailed to PARA's Treasurer, Bob Isaacs, via USPS. The new website will be able to incorporate online dues payment. Once we are satisfied with the back-of-the-house research, online payments will become a secure feature on PARA's website. We hope to activate this new payment method during the second half of 2023.

Thanks to Rita DuBrow, who chairs PARA's Benefits Committee, we once again have a chock-full article in this issue (see pages 6-7) about important retiree benefits, coordinated closely with the PANYNJ's Human Resources Department. This issue also features recurring events organized by retirees that help members keep up the close friendships formed during their Port Authority careers. Through the website and newsletter, PARA members get the word out about these events and assist those organizing new get-togethers.

Connecting retirees and providing information to help us all manage the increasingly complex world of health and Social Security benefits are at the heart of what PARA's volunteer Board and committee members happily devote many hours each year to provide. We continue to encourage more former – and current – Port Authority/PATH employees to join PARA, and we need more members to offer their time, talent, and ideas in sustaining our service to members.

The PARA Board and I wish you all a safe and joyous holiday season and a healthy new year.

**Karen Eastman, President**

## Officers & Board of Directors

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Al Rubbert (1994-2003)

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Richard Lee

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Frank Lombardi

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Ken Philmus

Peter Rinaldi

Herb Somerwitz

Donna Tucker

Louis P. Venech

Keith Walcott

[www.paranynj.org](http://www.paranynj.org)

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*The Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc. does not provide, and this newsletter does not constitute, legal, accounting, tax or other professional advice. We recommend you contact your own legal, accounting, tax or professional advisor as neither The Port Authority Retirees Association nor anyone associated with the Newsletter assumes responsibility for your relying on the information provided even though we have attempted to ensure that it reflects our understanding of what is presented.*

## On the Way for 2023: A New PARA Website

As a retiree, you have the freedom to leave the workforce behind and choose how to spend your time. You may consider moving to another state, or possibly staying put but choosing to downsize, or purchasing a second home and becoming a "snowbird." Many choices exist. Whatever decisions you make, you will need to address some changes. You may need to file a simple change-of-address form with the PANYNJ, SSA or the New York State Retirement System. Or you might need to check on certain benefits – health, insurance, or death benefits. Finally, you may want to connect with colleagues from your Port Authority years. It would be very convenient to have a website to inform and help you handle these retirement life changes.

PARA's existing website at [paranynj.org](http://paranynj.org) was created and maintained by webmaster Joe SanSevero to help you do exactly that. As a PANYNJ retiree himself, it was Joe's product and labor of love, without any compensation. The website slowly developed and he eventually provided links to many other established websites, including but not limited to the PANYNJ, NYS Retirement System, Social Security Administration, United Healthcare, Express Scripts, etc. The website also has other information and interesting features such as retiree, Medicare and healthcare forms, In Memoriam notices, PA News, and the PARA-phernalia newsletter.

The site offers the above valuable and useful information to PARA members, retirees, or active PA staff. Joe and his website have informed and helped countless members over the past 16 years. Evolving technology creates opportunities to enhance the website's usefulness into the future.

On October 12, with the PARA's Website Committee's recommendation, the PARA Board voted to hire Potomac Digitek (PODI) as the vendor to provide a server setup, website design, template and page development, and content loading and testing. PODI will provide hosting, updating and support, directed by the PARA Board.

Along with members of the Website Committee, Joe SanSevero will help ensure that all the substantive features of the current site will be available on the new website.

If all goes according to plan, the new website will go live sometime in the first quarter of 2023. Upon the PARA Board's acceptance of the new website design and development, there will be a four-month testing period. During this period, Joe and all individual members of the Board will be involved in testing the new website while the existing website remains available.

Once the first phase is accepted by the Board, then, and only then, will the Board authorize the second phase, which will include creating an online database of members and payment of dues by electronic means. *Editor's Note: The Spring 2023 newsletter will include minutes of the October 12 discussion after adoption by the Board at its January meeting.*

***PARA's upcoming new website will continue to fulfill Joe SanSevero's vision of helping its members with many of retirement's life challenges and of making its administration and maintenance more in line with today's technology.***

# Board and Annual Meeting Minutes

## PORT AUTHORITY RETIREES ASSOCIATION, INC.

### Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Directors held on July 13, 2022

#### And

### Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Association held on July 13, 2022

The Annual Meeting of the Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc. was convened at 9:30 am via Zoom technology. The following officers and members of the Board were present: President Eastman, Vice President Hoffmann, Vice President Malone-Hodges, Secretary Raczynski, Treasurer Isaacs and Directors Murtagh, Philmus, Morrow, Karvasarsky, Somerwitz, Gallagher, F. Lombardi, Blauser, Rinaldi, Fitzpatrick, D. Lombardi, Walcott, Venech, Hadley-Bailey, Tucker, Lee, DeLaura, Graser, DuBrow and Hellenbrecht. Also present were Joe SanSevero and Robert Parisi.

Treasurer Isaacs summarized the voting process and gave the Treasurer's Report. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the Treasurer's Report. A motion was made by the Secretary, seconded, and approved to accept the results of the election which re-elected the PARA Officers and Directors as follows: for terms of one-year or until superseded, President Eastman, Vice-President Hoffmann, Vice-President Malone-Hodges, Secretary Raczynski, Treasurer Isaacs, and Assistant Treasurer Cutler and the following Directors for terms of three years: Eastman, Murtagh, Isaacs, Philmus, Raczynski, Morrow, Karvasarsky, Somerwitz and Malone-Hodges. Treasurer Isaacs also reported that an audit report was completed for the years 2020 and 2021 with no issues found. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the results of the audit report. The Annual Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am.

### Minutes of the Quarterly Board Meeting of July 13, 2022

The Quarterly Meeting of the Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc. was convened at 9:45 am following the Annual Meeting. The following officers and members of the Board were present: President, Eastman, Vice-President Hoffmann, Vice-President Malone-Hodges, Secretary Raczynski, Treasurer Isaacs and Directors Murtagh, Philmus, Morrow, Karvasarsky, Somerwitz, Gallagher, F. Lombardi, Blauser, Rinaldi, Borrelli, Fitzpatrick, D. Lombardi, Walcott, Venech, Hadley-Bailey, Tucker, Lee, DeLaura, Graser, DuBrow and Hellenbrecht. Also present was Joe SanSevero.

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on April 11, 2022, as previously circulated and commented on were adopted pursuant to unanimous resolution of the Board. Director Hoffmann reported that two \$200 donations were made – one in memory of Chuck Seliga to the Hudson Valley Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and the other in memory of Lee Goodman to the Michael J. Fox Foundation. A motion was made, seconded, and approved for the above donations. Very lovely responses were received from each spouse thanking the Board.

Director Isaacs reported that June was a good month for dues collection. Expenditures were minimal during the quarter, primarily for printing and mailing of the newsletter. He also reported that

interest rates are still very low. PARA's total assets are very good as is the fiscal condition of the organization. Total PARA membership is declining slightly and increasing membership remains a high priority. He continues to follow-up where possible on the returns of PARA material. Director Venech asked for any comments on the latest newsletter.

Director Hoffmann sent all Board Members detailed updates via email in May and June on the status of the new website. All comments to that email were addressed. Director Frank Lombardi reported on the following progress since April. The Committee identified and met with two vendors who further defined the scope of work and the posting and updating of information. Phase II of the contract will be site management plus the creation of a member list and a method for electronic dues collection. The two vendors are Global Internet Technologies and Potomac Digitek, the latter was recommended by Director Dennis Lombardi.

A proposal was received from Potomac Digitek and the other from Global Internet Technologies is expected shortly. The one proposal received was reviewed and seems very good. The timing on that proposal would have the site go-live by December or January. The Committee will review the second proposal when received and make a selection. Director Somerwitz advised that Phase I should be the priority right now while leaving some time for further Board discussion on Phase II. Director Rinaldi advised that the qualifications of both companies should be carefully considered. We should have the option to adjust the scope of work as we proceed, making the website more comprehensive than it currently is and having the vendor handle everything.

A discussion was had regarding allowing organizational memberships in PARA. Such memberships will be accepted. The individual submitting the organizational membership need not be a PARA member. The organizational membership will get one vote.

It was decided to raise the PARA dues from \$10 to \$20 effective January 2023. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to do so. Director DuBrow reported a quiet month regarding benefits. She also reported that HR has hired a replacement for Elvira Navas, who recently retired from the PA. HR is still working on the HR portal, which is currently experiencing access issues. Directors Malone-Hodges, Hadley-Bailey, and Venech are on the Committee for the Pillars of the Community Awards again this year and will be evaluating nominations when they are received.

Director Blauser asked the Board to consider possible candidates for election to the Board and to fill the positions of Treasurer and Secretary in 2023. The candidates need not be retired.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 12, at 9:30 am via Zoom.



# Remembering Those Lost on 9/11

*The Port Authority family gathered as always on September 11th at St. Peter's Church on Barclay Street for an Interfaith Remembrance Service to mark the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. The agency also held a rose-laying service a few days earlier at the WTC Memorial pools, continuing an on-site remembrance introduced among the events marking the 20th anniversary of the attacks last year.*



**Current and former Port Authority employees and families gathered for the service in St. Peter's Church.**



**Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton addressed the gathering.**

**Retirees Alan Hicks and Alice Kee joined PARA Vice President Maria Malone-Hodges after the service.**



**PAPD Chaplain Rev. Vincente Martinez helped lead the program.**



# Golfing for a Cause

**Editor's Note:** Thanks to event organizer and PANYNJ retiree Paul Iannacone for the following account and event photos.

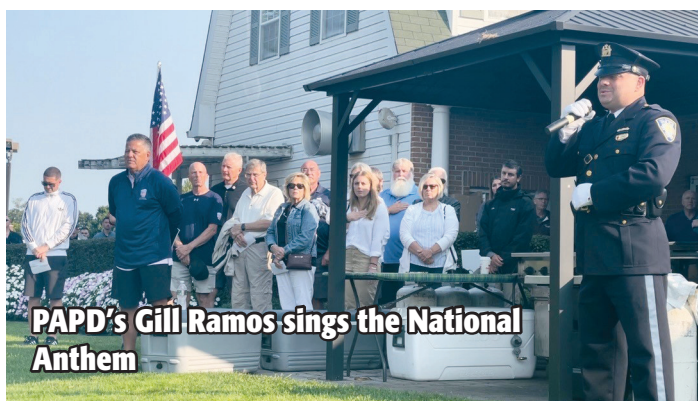
The WTC Memorial Golf Club held its Annual Golf Outing at Pebble Creek Golf Club in Colts Neck, New Jersey. The WTC Memorial Golf Invitational is held the Friday after 9/11 every year. As in the past 20 years, the event was a huge success with over 300 in attendance. The morning ceremony which the Port Authority Police Pipes and Drums Band performed along with Gill Ramos singing the National Anthem was beautiful. During the ceremony, WTC Memorial Scholarship Chair Jessica Dobrin and Assistant Chair Carissa Meyer Roloson presented the scholarship checks to the winners. This year's winner of the WTC Memorial Scholarship was Nicholas Lombardo. Nicholas is attending Cornell University and will receive \$15,500 over the next 4 years in memory of those whom we lost February 26, 1993 and September 11, 2001. This year's winner of the WTC Memorial Scholarship Charlie Ness award was Andrew DeLara, who will receive \$2,500. With the money raised from this year's outing, the WTC Memorial Fund also donated \$6,000 to the family of fallen PAPD Officer Anthony Varvaro who was tragically killed on the morning of 9/11.

## About the WTC Memorial Golf Club / WTC Memorial Fund Inc.

We established a nonprofit 501(c)(3) Public Charity incorporated under the name WTC Memorial Fund, Inc. On every Friday following September 11, we hold an Annual Golf Invitational/Fundraising Event at Pebble Creek Golf Course in Colts Neck, New Jersey. The event has helped to raise money to be used to provide college scholarships in the names of those who died; to erect and maintain a permanent monument dedicated to the employees of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey lost in the attacks; and continued support to other worthy charitable organizations and individuals with both financial assistance and donations. The group may organize a Spring walk-a-thon. Please check us out at [WTCTMemorialGolfClub.com](http://WTCTMemorialGolfClub.com).




**WTC Memorial Scholarship Winner Nicholas Lombardo**



## Centennial Book Discounted

The agency's Centennial history book now is available to the public, as well as to active and former PANYNJ employees. The current price is \$ 50.00; buyers can order a second copy for \$ 25.00 plus shipping and handling. To purchase By Air, Land, Rail, and Sea: The Port Authority of NY and NJ, 1921-2021, go to <https://panynj.myshopify.com/> to order. Feel free to share this link with others interested in obtaining copies. Contact Jimmy Diaz at [jadiaz@panynj.gov](mailto:jadiaz@panynj.gov) with any questions.

# FOR YOUR BENEFIT



**The Employee Benefits Customer Care & Solutions team continues to be available to our retirees and their eligible dependents via phone at (212) 435-2870 Monday through Friday 9am – 5pm or through our dedicated email [hr\\_employeebenefits@panynj.gov](mailto:hr_employeebenefits@panynj.gov). *PARA thanks the HR team members for their continuing contribution and support by providing these important reminders regarding benefits for which you may be eligible:***

## Need a Vaccine?

With flu season upon us, the Port Authority would like to remind our retirees that vaccines and boosters remain our best defense against severe illness and hospitalization. Getting a vaccine markedly lowers the risk of contracting complications from certain illnesses. An unusually severe flu season is predicted for this year and staying up to date with vaccinations is our best protection against contracting and spreading these illnesses – and our best chance to have a holiday season that feels like pre-pandemic times. For additional information on vaccines, you can visit [myuhc.com](http://myuhc.com) or review the information below. Co-pays differ based on plans and Medicare status. To see if any co-pays are applicable, contact your plan administrator (Medicare, United Health Care, Express Scripts).

- **Flu Shot:** United Healthcare (UHC) members can contact their primary care provider, or at one of the following retail pharmacies and network convenience care clinics, listed at [uhc.com/flushot](http://uhc.com/flushot). Please note that vaccines are covered solely through UHC and not covered under our prescription plan with Express Scripts.

- **COVID-19 Vaccine & Booster:** The recently approved booster shot provides enhanced protection against the highly contagious Omicron variant of COVID-19 and is widely available at pharmacies and doctors' offices throughout the bistate region.
- **Shingles:** Retirees under 65 who are UHC members can obtain the shingles vaccine through their primary care provider, or at a participating retail pharmacy and network convenience care clinics. Retirees on Medicare would need to obtain a shingles vaccine through the Part D prescription plan administered by Express Scripts.
- As a reminder, CVS is no longer participating in United Healthcare's national Medical Benefit Agreement for preventative vaccines, except for the COVID-19 vaccine. Retirees on Medicare can still get certain vaccines at CVS. Please plan your vaccination in advance and use our list of participating providers so you do not receive any unwanted bills.

## Medicare and You

***Some of the most frequent questions we get from retirees are about Medicare. With that, here are some important things to remember about Medicare:***

### What is Medicare?

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for eligible U.S. citizens and legal residents. It is funded in part by taxes you pay while working. Medicare is not a family health plan. It is not Social Security, Medicaid or free.

### When am I eligible for Medicare?

Medicare is for people 65 or older, disabled, have ALS or ESRD (End Stage Renal Disease). Individuals receiving disability benefits from Social Security must enroll after a 24-month period of receiving benefits. If you are 65 or older you must sign up for Medicare 3 months prior to your 65th birthday.

### Do I have to enroll in Medicare?

Yes, you or your eligible dependent(s) must enroll in

Medicare Parts A and B to ensure full continuation under the Port Authority/PATH retiree health plan. If you wait, you may be assessed a penalty by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). You will also be subject to a late enrollment period with waiting times up to 1 year. During that time, you will be responsible for any outstanding claims you receive.

### What do I have to do to enroll in Medicare?

For information about enrolling in Medicare, visit [Medicare.gov](http://Medicare.gov) or contact the Benefits Customer Care & Solutions team – we will provide you a Medicare Overview and important information on how claims will be processed when Medicare is primary. Once enrolled, we require you to send a copy of your Medicare card to us at [HR\\_EmployeeBenefits@panynj.gov](mailto:HR_EmployeeBenefits@panynj.gov). It is also

***Continued on page 7***



the responsibility of the disabled Medicare recipient to notify Employee Benefits of the date of their Medicare eligibility and to provide a copy of their Medicare card.

## Medicare Part B Reimbursement Program Deadline Reminder

Certain Port Authority/PATH retirees are eligible for reimbursement for their Medicare Part B premiums. To be eligible, you must meet all of the following:

1. Retired after July 1, 2000
2. Retired as a Port Authority/PATH permanent non-represented employee, including Field Police (FP), or a member of the FM or FS Unions; and
3. Are age 65 or older

This benefit is also available to your spouse when you both are age 65 or older. This benefit is only for Medicare Part B premiums reimbursements. Medicare Part D is not applicable.

HealthEquity, formally known as WageWorks, administers this benefit for the Port Authority of NY & NJ and will send information once a member becomes eligible. It will include details on required documentation needed to process your reimbursement. You can also refer to the Health Equity Quick Start Guide for information on registering for online access and instructions for submitting a claim. *Editor's Note: The Quick Start Guide*

*is available on the PARA website (See Medicare Part B Reimbursement Update, highlighted on the home page). Two highlights from the Guide:*

- Register online now! If you haven't registered online yet, please do so today. To register, just visit [www.healthequity.com/wageworks](http://www.healthequity.com/wageworks), select "LOG IN/REGISTER" and then "Employee Registration." You'll need to answer a few simple questions and create a username and password.
- Download the EZ Receipts® mobile app! Use your mobile device to file claims and take care of your account paperwork from anywhere. Go to [www.healthequity.com/wageworks](http://www.healthequity.com/wageworks) to learn more.

There is an annual deadline for your reimbursement submissions. The deadline for submitting your Medicare Part B form and documentation is March 31st for the prior year (e.g. March 31, 2023, for 2022 reimbursement claims).

HealthEquity representatives may be reached at (877) 924-3967. Claims can be submitted on the HealthEquity website by logging into your account at [www.HealthEquity.com/Wageworks](http://www.HealthEquity.com/Wageworks). If you require a hard copy form and prefer to mail in your reimbursement request, please reach out to HealthEquity directly, once you are ready to process the request. Annual reminders will not be sent out for this program; it is the responsibility of the eligible member to submit for their reimbursement annually.

## Time to Send 2023 Dues

This mailing includes a dues remittance envelope and a form to ensure your USPS and email addresses are current. Note that PARA's Board of Directors has approved the first dues increase in eleven years to support continued mailing of the newsletter, introduction and maintenance of the new website highlighted in this issue, and other ongoing costs. Annual dues are \$ 20.00 effective with your 2023 renewal. PARA collects dues throughout the year on a calendar year basis. If you are unsure of your dues status, go to the PARA website (<https://paranynj.org/Dues/index.htm>) and click the link at the bottom of the page. This will generate an e-mail request to PARA's Treasurer about your dues status. We thank you for your continued support of PARA.

## Catch Up at PA/PATH Retiree Gatherings

In addition to the quarterly South/Central Jersey luncheons featured in this issue, at least two other regular retiree luncheon gatherings occur on the Last Wednesday of the Month. Here are the details:

A longstanding group formerly meeting in Fort Lee now convenes in nearby Ridgely at Café Tivoli, 533 Shaler Boulevard. The next two luncheons are on November 30 and December 28. Contact Tony Coppolecchia for more information at [acoppolecc@verizon.net](mailto:acoppolecc@verizon.net).

Another LWOM club meets during the winter months at Mel's Way Bistro at the Poinciana Country Club, 3536 Poinciana Drive, Lake

Worth Florida. Upcoming luncheons are January 25, February 22, and March 22. Contact Bob Isaacs at [bob@bobisaacs.net](mailto:bob@bobisaacs.net) to get on the group's email list.

Several PAPD retiree groups also are active (see their websites for details). The Port Authority Retired Police Association holds four meetings and four social events annually ([www.parpagroup.com](http://www.parpagroup.com)). Another group has a multi-day Florida reunion every Fall (<https://signal8-2clubofflorida.com>), and another website ([www.signal8-2.com](http://www.signal8-2.com)) has information about a Western US group of PAPD retirees and other related associations.

# South/Central Jersey Retirees Luncheon

The South/Central Jersey Retirees (SCJR) met for lunch on Thursday, October 13, 2022 at the Captain's Inn in Forked River. Sixty-two Port Authority/PATH retirees and eight guests attended. The group started meeting for lunch back in September 2007 and, with the exception of COVID19, have met quarterly over the past fifteen years. Including this luncheon, there have been 53 luncheons held with 461 PA or PATH retirees attending at least one luncheon. Twenty retirees have attended 30 or more of the 53 luncheons. The Captain's Inn hosts the luncheon and provides a bountiful buffet lunch, including a salad bar, coffee and dessert. Soft drinks are also included at no additional cost. The next luncheon will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2023. Please contact Liz DeLaura (lzd1071@gmail.com) or Rita DuBrow (ritasue25@comcast.net) if you would like to be added to the email list.



**SCJR 15th Anniversary Luncheon – October 13, 2022**

## Those We Have Lost (In Memoriam)

Arnold M. Katz	04/13/2022	Michael J. Spina	07/30/2022
Cecilia M. Healy	05/16/2022	Robert "Bob" P. Lillis	07/31/2022
Charles (Chuck) Gary Seliga	05/20/2022	Robert A. Berckes	08/01/2022
Michael A. Manning	05/28/2022	Dr. Anthony J. Sartor	
Leon (Lee) Goodman	06/05/2022	(Former PA Commissioner)	08/05/2022
Richard A. Wong	06/18/2022	Gary Reed Greer	08/08/2022
Martin K. O'Dea	06/21/2022	Juanito Alberto Rohan	08/19/2022
Francis (Frank) W. Penaskovic	06/24/2022	Sandra M. Ward	08/22/2022
George A. McCleod	06/28/2022	Mary H. "Polly" Donlon	08/27/2022
Ronald Gaidus	06/30/2022	Agnes P. De Giacomo	
Joseph A. Falkowski	07/02/2022	(Wife of Retiree John De Giacomo)	
Vernon C. Berndt	07/08/2022	Matthew G. Forte	08/19/2022
Vincent "Brian" Donovan	07/13/2022	Latoya L. Galloway	09/03/2022
Frederick G. Maley	07/17/2022	Anthony Varvaro	09/11/2022
John A. Varriano	07/17/2022	Grace Nelson	09/25/2022
James D. Clancy	07/20/2022	August Pasqueriello	09/26/2022
Anthony (Tony) Stryjewski	07/22/2022	Carl Blair Smith	09/26/2022
Charles F. Kurz	07/26/2022	Vincent Volpicelli	09/29/2022
Evelyn Alter Thomashefsky	07/26/2022	Steven R. Russell	09/29/2022
Charles F. Matthew	07/27/2022	Peter Anthony Nizborski	10/15/2022
David Lee	07/30/2022	Pedro Collazo	10/21/2022

*Names of deceased include those reported to PARA as of November 1, 2022*

**You can get more information by going to the following links and then clicking on a specific person's name.**

[https://paranynj.org/Memoriam/2020/In\\_Memoriam\\_2020.htm](https://paranynj.org/Memoriam/2020/In_Memoriam_2020.htm)

[https://paranynj.org/Memoriam/In\\_Memoriam\\_Archive.htm](https://paranynj.org/Memoriam/In_Memoriam_Archive.htm)

**In addition to this listing, please remember in your thoughts and prayers those members of our retiree community and their families who have been afflicted with COVID-19 and, most especially, those whose lives have been taken as a result of this deadly disease.**