



Disability History and Awareness Month 2023

James Zadroga

James Zadroga was a detective in the New York Police Department and worked there from 1992 until 2004 when he was granted a medical retirement. Zadroga was among the many first responders on the ground immediately following the 9/11 attacks. Before his nearly 450 hours at ground zero, Zadroga was a healthy non-smoker with no known history of asthma or other respiratory conditions. Shortly after, Zadroga developed a persistent cough. As the months progressed, he developed shortness of breath and could not walk distances of more than 100 feet without gasping for air. Although he was awarded a sizeable payout from the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund and was approved for permanent disability retirement, Zadroga passed away in January 2006. Zadroga was among the first responders to pass away due to injuries sustained from the ground-zero rescue and recovery efforts.



Following his death, Zadroga was honored on the state and national level, having multiple pieces of 9/11-related compensation packages and expansions named after him. The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act was most recently amended and reauthorized in 2015 to extend coverage and compensation until 2090. Zadroga was also honored in his hometown of North Arlington, New Jersey, with the renaming of the Skyline Sports Complex, from which the Twin Towers could be seen, which became the James Zadroga Soccer Field; he also has two monuments in the borough dedicated in his name.

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