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Police Documents Reveal Sequence of Events in Hurricane Irene Tragedy on Rosedale Road

October 7, 2011

DRIVER NOTIFIED POLICE THAT CAR WAS ABANDONED, DID NOT IGNORE BARRICADE

After rescuer Michael Kenwood died attempting to reach a stranded car during Hurricane Irene, some people aimed their anger at the driver of the car for ignoring a road block and failing to notify police that the car was abandoned on Rosedale Road.

Some people even suggested that the driver should be prosecuted.

But a review of police dispatch recordings, emergency recordings, and investigation reports obtained by Planet Princeton through the state's Open Public Records Act reveals that there were no barricades on the road when the car got stranded and that the driver did alert police that the car was left on the road and was empty.

Following is what we know from the recordings and the police reports, which include detailed interviews with the driver, police, and emergency personnel.

A New York City woman drove her grey Volvo along Rosedale Road in Princeton Township in the early morning hours of Aug. 28, when the car became disabled near the Greenway Meadow Park due to rising flood waters.

She had been visiting her in-laws in Belle Mead along with her husband, but the group had to evacuate the home because of extreme flooding. They were trying to make it to a house in Lawrenceville, the parents following behind in a second car, but Route 206 was blocked off so they turned off on Elm Road.

The driver didn't see any barricades, and interviews and video footage later confirmed that there were no roadblocks at Elm and Rosedale at the time the car was first observed stuck on the road. (Some law enforcement officials say roadblocks had likely been put up, but could have washed away by then.)

Heading toward Lawrence on Rosedale, the driver of the Volvo observed low standing water. As she drove into it, she stopped to back out because deeper water was ahead of her. Water suddenly rushed against the passenger side of her car. The force was so strong that her husband, who was in the front passenger seat, couldn't open his door.

The Volvo stalled and would not restart. The driver tried to open the sun roof, but it was stuck. Her husband forced it open manually so they could both get out. The couple then inched their way toward General Johnson Drive and were met by his parents, who had stopped their car when they saw the Volvo backing up on Rosedale Road. The group then drove to the Nassau Inn in Princeton Borough.

When the couple arrived at the hotel shortly after 4:40 a.m., they saw two borough police officers outside, told them the car was disabled and was empty, and provided police with the make and model number of the car. A borough police officer notified police dispatch at 4:47 a.m.

"I was just made aware by somebody being dropped off at the Nassau Inn that they had to leave their vehicle abandoned in the middle of Rosedale Road into the township near the park," Det. Thomas Lagomarsino said. "Standby for the license plate if you could just give that to the township."

"Okay," said the dispatcher. "They have a vehicle there that was submerged in water... What kind of car is it, because the squad is about to launch a board to see if anybody is inside it."

"It's a grey Volvo," Lagomarsino said. "And the car is empty. Everyone was able to get out."

"This one is going to be a different one than the one they have totally submerged," the dispatcher radioed back to Lagomarsino at 4:51 a.m.. "Do you have a call back for this person so the township can eventually maybe get back in contact with them at some point?"

In the darkness, as the storm raged, police and township workers had been trying to find out if the car was empty. They came to Rosedale Road after receiving reports that a car was stranded there. Officers used a public address system to call out to the car but got no response. They asked the driver to honk the horn or step on the brakes, but nothing.

One officer who arrived at the scene observed the car facing west, submerged up to its bumper. Water was flowing from the Stony Brook Creek over the bridge, creating a current that ran south, and the water was rising swiftly.

The officer noticed that the rear hazard lights of the car were on. While the officers waited for the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad to arrive, at least two officers saw the car's brake lights go on, casting doubt that the car was still empty.

After receiving the report about the Volvo, police tried to confirm whether the sedan submerged in water was the same car, but could not because of poor lighting conditions and visibility. One officer thought he saw the blue stripe of a New York plate, but couldn't be sure.

At about 4:55 a.m. the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad team arrived. The water rescue team of Peter Simon and Michael Kenwood, wearing dry suits and flotation devices they had put on at headquarters, inflated the squad's "banana boat" and put on water rescue helmets. They then joined officers and were told that there was a previous report of an abandoned vehicle on the road, and that the occupants were safe.

But they reported that there appeared to be at least one other vehicle on the roadway, with headlights on,

and therefore they could not be sure if the other car was empty or not. Officers attempted again to read the license plate of the car on the bridge using a stronger pair of binoculars, but could not see anything because the water level was up to the car's frame, about a foot high. The current was pushing the car sideways on the bridge.

The rescue group decided that the team would approach the vehicle to confirm its identity and determine whether there were occupants inside because they could not be 100 percent sure it was the Volvo.

After the water rescue team assessed the situation, they decided to go ahead by foot without using the banana boat because the boat would create a significant profile in the flowing water.

The pair took a position in the center of the roadway where it was highest, at the water's edge, with Simon in the lead. They shuffled toward the car to minimize imbalance and identify potholes, manholes, and debris. Kenwood followed Simon, holding on to Simon's flotation device.

About half way to the car, Simon decided the two should turn back, because the depth and force of the water were increasing rapidly. Even if they could make it closer to the car, Simon realized they would never get close enough to complete their task, and decided the added risk was unwarranted. The water level was at mid shin, but the flow alone was not strong enough to disrupt their stability.

The pair turned around, Simon in the lead again, with Kenwood following and holding on to Simon's flotation device. About five steps into their retreat, Kenwood told Simon he was losing his balance and said he was falling. Simon felt a pull downstream, and attempted to compensate by walking with the pull instead of fighting it. His feet found the curb, and he tried to brace himself from flowing further, but the current or possibly the tug from Kenwood was too great, and he was pulled over the curb into the water again.

The two were swept about 30 feet downstream when their line snagged on an evergreen tree. Simon was able to get on his knees, but could not see Kenwood because of the low tree branches. He called out to him a few times but heard no response. Simon yelled for Kenwood to pull the the breakaway strap on his flotation device, but again there was no response. Simon then cut the line connecting them to keep from being dragged downstream, and Kenwood floated downstream. Simon radioed to tell the squad he had to cut the line and Kenwood was trapped under water. A few minutes later Kenwood was pulled out and brought to shore. He was in cardiac arrest and CPR was started.

Simon grabbed on to a tree to keep from being swept up in the water. He waited and gave the okay signal while rescuers took care of Kenwood. After Kenwood was taken to the University Medical Center at Princeton, a rescue team used a telephone pole as an anchor, threw Simon a rescue line, and then guided him to shore. He then went to the hospital so he could be with Kenwood and his family.

Police confirmed later that the car was the same grey Volvo reported abandoned by the New York couple.

Kenwood died later that night at the hospital.

Editor's note: Planet Princeton received the borough police dispatch recordings and other information with the help of Montclair lawyer Richard Gutman. The borough, on the advice of its legal counsel and in consultation with the township lawyer, initially rejected the public records request, arguing that the materials were the subject of an ongoing investigation.

Gutman pointed out to the borough lawyer, among other things, that records kept or maintained prior to

an investigation are not exempt from disclosure under the Open Public Records Act just because they become part of an investigation.

A day after Planet Princeton and Gutman objected to the denial, the borough released the records. The borough lawyer said the records were being released because the Princeton Township investigation had been concluded.

Planet Princeton also filed public records requests with Mercer County and Princeton Township and received all the information this week, including recordings and, in the case of the township, investigative reports.



by Krystal Knapp on October 7, 2011 · [2 comments](#)

[2 comments... read them below or [add one](#)]

JanieH [October 11, 2011 at 11:43 pm](#)

This is such a tragic story and so much was left unanswered in the press. Thank you for pursuing this story and providing much needed information to the community. I am sure that the could who had to abandon the car feel at least somewhat better with the record set straight.

[Richard K. Rein](#) [October 8, 2011 at 10:30 am](#)

Excellent reporting — something we are not seeing often in community journalism. Thank you, Krystal Knapp and Planet Princeton. — Rich Rein, editor, U.S. 1 Newspaper.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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U.S. NEWS | SEPTEMBER 2, 2011, 9:33 P.M. ET

Michael Kenwood: Wading Into Danger

By [PETER LOFTUS](#) And [DIONNE SEARCEY](#)

That Michael Kenwood was willing to wade through dangerous floodwaters in a rescue attempt was no surprise to those who knew him. They say the 39-year-old lawyer and computer consultant was passionate about his volunteer work as an emergency medical technician for the Princeton, N.J., First Aid & Rescue Squad, and trained for water rescues.

His devotion cost him his life on Sunday, in a rescue attempt on an overflowing creek during Hurricane Irene. He left behind his wife and toddler daughter.

"He was committed and passionate about being here to help," said Amy Margolis, his sister-in-law. "I think people like that make us all feel lucky that someone is brave enough to do that for us."

The call came to Mr. Kenwood's unit at 4:36 a.m., said Greg Paulson, deputy director of the Princeton rescue squad. There was a car just outside downtown Princeton that was partly submerged and possibly occupied.

Moments later, a crew of about 20 people from the squad as well as from the local fire department and Princeton Township police department showed up at the flooded Stony Brook Creek, right by the Rosedale Road bridge.

The car's brake lights were flashing. Its circuits could have been shorting out, or maybe someone was inside signaling for help. It was dark, windy and raining, and the crew, using binoculars, couldn't determine whether it was occupied.

"If there's a possibility a victim is trapped in a car, it's our responsibility to go out and rescue that victim if necessary," Mr. Paulson said.

Mr. Kenwood and his fellow rescue squad volunteer Peter Simon put on their high-tech rescue gear and carefully ventured into the water, after attaching themselves to one another and a long rope tied to a rescue vehicle on dry land. The water was just shin-high, but the current was fast, said Mr. Paulson.

When they were about 100 feet out, about five minutes after they started out, the men decided it was too dangerous and that they needed to turn back. But Mr. Kenwood shouted that he was losing his footing, and fell. Mr. Simon was unable to steady himself enough to help Mr. Kenwood up, and he fell as well.

In a matter of seconds, the current had carried both men about 15 feet to a tree that caught the rope and separated them on either side of the trunk, where they became stuck. Both were lying down in the water, which was a mere two feet deep at this point. Mr. Simon's head was above water, but Mr. Kenwood was face down. Mr. Kenwood wasn't responding, so Mr. Simon cut the rope to free him.

In an instant, Mr. Kenwood was carried downstream. Mr. Simon grabbed hold of the tree to secure himself and stood up in a small eddy of calm water that had formed there.

A rescuer swam out and pulled in Mr. Kenwood, who was in cardiac arrest. CPR was performed, and his heartbeat was re-established before he was taken to a Princeton hospital. He never regained consciousness, Ms. Margolis said, and later died.

Meanwhile, Mr. Simon was still trapped with rushing water all around him. Four men, reinforcements from the nearby Rocky Hill Fire Department, waded into the water, used a telephone pole as an anchor point and extended a rope to Mr. Simon. At about 6:30 a.m., they all made it safely to shore. Mr. Simon was uninjured.

By this time, the car that had been of concern floated away. It was unoccupied.

"We certainly did everything we could to minimize the risks involved in this kind of rescue," Mr. Paulson said. "We had the proper training, the proper equipment, and even with all this, rescues like this have a high degree of risk, and there's no way to eliminate that risk."

For Ms. Margolis, it's hard to hear people talk about Irene's less-than-feared impact. "The truth is there were tragedies," she said. "People still lost their lives. And my poor niece will never have her father again."

Write to Peter Loftus at peter.loftus@dowjones.com and Dionne Searcey at dionne.searcey@wsj.com

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PRINCETON: Squad, police, family bid farewell to EMT

DATE POSTED: Friday, September 2, 2011 5:16 PM EDT
 By Victoria Hurley-Schubert, Staff Writer

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Pallbearers carry the coffin of Michael Kenwood after services for the Princeton emergency medical technician Wednesday in Paramus. Staff photo by Phil McAuliffe

A dotting father, loving husband, community volunteer and hero were all words used to describe Emergency Medical Technician Michael Kenwood at his funeral on Wednesday.

At an overflowing Robert Schoem's Menorah Chapel in Paramus, hundreds came to honor the 39-year-old Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad (PFARS) member who died from injuries sustained during an attempted swift water rescue at an abandoned car in the western section of Princeton Township on Sunday.

His was the first death in the line of duty for PFARS in its more than 70-year history, said Greg Paulson, deputy director of the 75-member volunteer squad.

"He was passionate about life and loved challenges," said his mother, Sheila Kenwood Lobel. "He would drive me crazy by telling me after the fact of bungee jumping off a bridge, sky diving or double black skiing. He loved new adventures."

"He loved life and he loved helping people," continued Ms. Lobel. "When he was an attorney, he did pro bono work for people who couldn't afford to pay. He frequently thought of others first; one time he was in a car accident with two passengers with him, the windshield had shattered and he had severed major blood vessels in his wrists and was bleeding profusely, but his priority was to get the others out of the car."

This passion for helping others led his to rescue work and PFARS. Mr. Kenwood was a highly trained EMT, with certifications in vehicle extraction. High-angle rescue, ice rescue and swift water recovery.

Mr. Kenwood, an East Windsor resident, joined PFARS in February 2008 and quickly became an inseparable member of the squad's family, so much so he was honored with the "Extra Mile" award that first year. He was also a morale trustee, member of several committees and the information technology administrator.

"He was impressed with the amount of training (PFARS) offered, the camaraderie of squad members and the knowledge there were times when he could really contribute," said his mother. "Because he felt deeply about helping others he felt he had to try and help the possible victims in that submerged car the other day. He was doing what he was trained for, what he was dedicated to and loved when it took him from us. There are no words that can encompass the knowledge that I will never see him again or hold him or laugh with him."

Ms. Lobel also thanked the throngs of people who came to pay their respects.

Mr. Kenwood's mother also spoke about the "terrible accident" that cost her son his life. "We rushed to Princeton University Medical Center during the hurricane," she said. "When we got there he was unresponsive."

He died about 10:30 p.m. on Sunday at the hospital on Witherspoon Street.

Mr. Kenwood loved to be with his family, his wife and 3-year-old daughter, who were the center of his world and the loves of his life, said his mother, of her middle son. When her son met his wife Elizabeth in December 2003, he was immediately taken with her.

"Michael said 'she may be smarter than me,' and he was so impressed," she said. "They shared many loves, including cooking and eating. Michael could keep eating and eating and eating. It gave joy to others to see how they loved each other."

Mr. Kenwood's rabbi, Jay Kornsgold of Beth El Synagogue in East Windsor, described him as a loving family man who was wonderful with children and doted on his young daughter.

"Beth shared with me that Michael was a special and loving husband," he said. "She said there is not enough she can say to talk about all the wonderful parts of his personality. As a father, Michael was amazing. He was so patient and funny with her and entertaining. He loved to carry her on his shoulders, to sing to her, to read to her, to run around the kitchen together playing 'Red Light, Green Light,' and he found fun ways to teach her."

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Mr. Kenwood was the founder and president of the East Windsor-based Kenwood Technical Consulting, a computer consulting firm and an intellectual property attorney. He was an avid reader, particularly science fiction, loved to play computer games and board games, and collected comic books.

"For years, his face was buried in a book when we went someplace," recalled Ms. Lobel.

His brothers, Richard and Jason, also spoke and mourners heard touching stories from his family and witty stories from college friends during the service, which drew attendees from Boston to Baltimore.

"Michael's loss is tragic and so difficult to comprehend, but it is of some comfort to know he died doing what he loved," said Peter Simon, PFARS president and college friend of Mr. Kenwood. "Michael is a hero. Not for how he lost his life, but for how he lived it. For how he volunteered to make his community better, for how he served our squad and for how he loved his family and friends."

Mr. Simon first met Mr. Kenwood during their college years at Brandeis University as part of their Emergency Medical Corps, even sharing a suite with him during their junior and senior years. Mr. Simon and Mr. Kenwood shared almost 20 years of friendship, from hanging out and watching "Star Trek" in college to backyard barbecues by the pool with their families.

"A few years ago, Michael moved to the Princeton area; it was wonderful to have my friend so close by again, and before too long, he and I discussed the possibility of Michael getting back into EMS," said Mr. Simon in his eulogy. "Michael had enjoyed the experience from college and now that he and his family were settling into a community, he wanted to do something to make a positive impact on his community. Volunteering and helping others fed his soul and he enjoyed the ability to make a difference in peoples' lives."

Mr. Kenwood was a constant presence at the squad building, helping with computer issues and younger volunteers.

"He was an excellent mentor and trainer to the newer squad members and also worked in numerous capacities to improve the organization from day one," said Mr. Simon. "Michael's loss is tragic and so difficult to comprehend, but it is of some comfort to know that he died doing what he loved."

Wednesday morning several dozen emergency trucks, fire trucks and police vehicles left Princeton, creating a lengthy motorcade, which drew people to the curb to watch as it wound through local roads to make its way north. The closer it got to Paramus, the longer it became as companies from all over the state joined in to pay their respects.

Dignitaries in the sea of mourners included township officials, Mercer County Freeholder Andrew Koontz, Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno and Richard Serino, deputy administrator of FEMA.

Mr. Kenwood was buried at Beth El Cemetery in Washington Township in Bergen County following the service.

Mr. Kenwood leaves behind his wife, Elizabeth Frenkel, and 3-year-old daughter. He is also survived by his father, Martin Kenwood; mother, Sheila Kenwood Lobel; and brothers Richard and Jason Kenwood.

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Written by Victoria Hurley-Schubert | Thursday, 15 December 2011 15:29

Rescuer remembered as best friend, loving son, husband, father



Hurricane Irene left a path of destruction and flooding throughout the area, but her wrath was most felt in the Princeton and East Windsor communities that lost one of their own in a tragic accident the night of the storm.

The Aug. 28 storm that made landfall near Little Egg Inlet — the first hurricane to make landfall in the Garden State since 1903 — left a permanent mark on one family by claiming the life of Michael Kenwood, 39, a Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad member who was attempting a swift water rescue on Rosedale Road. He died that night of acute asphyxia due to drowning.

His was the first death in the line of duty for PFARS in its more than 70-year history, said Greg Paulson, deputy director of the 75-member volunteer squad.

Volunteering for the EMS helped Mr. Kenwood fulfill his desire to work in the medical field and help people.

"It was really a fit," said his mother, Sheila Kenwood Lobel.

This interest began as a teen when he was involved in a car accident and, despite profusely bleeding from a laceration to his arm, wanted to help others who were in the car with him.

"He just totally ignored it and dragged out at least one if not both of the girls and I know he felt after that the need to be able to take care of people and himself if there was a physical emergency of that type," said Ms. Lobel.

This desire to help people led him to the Brandeis University emergency medical corps where he met one of his closest friends, Peter Simon. They were suitemates the last two years of their time there and developed their lasting friendship.

And, of course, there were some college hijinks with the two friends.

"The first response unit on campus had a four-wheel drive Ford Bronco and we had a lot of off road areas we would cover," recalled Mr. Simon. "One day we went off road with the vehicle to explore one area and on the way back got it stuck on a rock. Mike and I were sitting there and waiting while the campus police came and we had to wait for a tow truck and he was a little nervous he was going to get in trouble, and the campus police gave us a little bit of a hard time, but our director was like, 'it happens.'"

The two remained friends after college and when Mr. Kenwood mentioned he was looking for a home in the Mercer County area to be closer to his wife, Beth's job, Mr. Simon recommended his hometown of East Windsor.



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"We were joking with him there was a house on our street that was for sale," said Mr. Simon. "In the end, they actually liked the area and ended up buying a house only five minutes away from us."

The friends would collect each other's mail when they were away, shared many celebrations together such as New Year's Eve and birthdays and called on each other during the hard times "It's somebody you can rely on in a time of need," said Mr. Simon. "It's that type of relationship where you've got the support that's right there."

Mr. Simon got involved with PFARS while he was doing graduate work at Princeton University.

"Knowing what the different squads were in the area and knowing the type of person Mike was, I felt Princeton would be an excellent niche for him as well," said Mr. Simon, president of PFARS. "He could interact at all different levels, he could interact with the younger kids, he would interact with the university students and he would interact with the older members.

"Michael was an easy going guy; there were no politics with him, you didn't have to worry about what you were saying to him that would get around to other places," said Mr. Simon. "He was a true friend."

Mr. Kenwood was a highly trained EMT, with certifications in vehicle extraction, high-angle rescue, ice rescue and swift water recovery.

"He was the type of person who always wanted to practice what he learned," said Ms. Lobel. "He wanted to do everything well, and he just wanted to do more and more. That was always a challenge to be as good as you could be and I always thought it was interesting the amount of hours that he had to put in for all of the additional training at the Rescue Squad."

With his brilliant computer mind, Mr. Kenwood began working on computers at the age of 3, said Ms. Lobel.

He loved to learn, which is what attracted him to computers and intellectual property law.

"He always was 'show me more, teach me more,'" said his mother. "Computers were just another avenue for someone with that type of personality."

After his initial degree, he could not decide whether he wanted to study law or medicine for his graduate work, said Ms. Lobel. Serving as an EMS volunteer helped balance those desires.

Mr. Kenwood was the founder and president of the East Windsor-based Kenwood Technical Consulting, a computer consulting firm and an intellectual property law office.

An avid skier since his youth, Mr. Kenwood loved a challenge and the more difficult, the better, even as a boy at summer camp.



"He took on archery, which, even though he was a lefty, he had to learn how to shoot righty because his eyes coordinated differently and one eye was better with seeing at a distance," recalled Ms. Lobel. "So even though he was true lefty, he had to learn to do it righty in order to do it the way he had to do it."

As an adult he loved activities such as bungee jumping and sky diving.

"I told him I slept through enough times at the hospital with him that he shouldn't keep doing that to me," his mother fondly recalled. "He just loved it, he loved it; it was thrilling."

Very athletic, Mr. Kenwood would ride to the rescue squad on his bicycle sometimes for the exercise.

"He was very physically fit," said his mother. "He was also into working out whether it was at home and using the equipment there or going to the gym."

Mr. Kenwood was a foodie and loved to eat and cook.

He loved everything from a good burger to Thai to tapas.

"They started to get into fondue cooking and doing that themselves," said Ms. Lobel. "They would have friends over for that."

He really began to discover food around age 8.

"It's amazing how much a lean person could eat," said Ms. Lobel. "He had a really good appetite."

But, he really began to broaden his culinary horizons in college, thanks to his roommate.

"I remember we went to the supermarket and he came out and said he could live on \$5 a week by buying macaroni and cheese," said Mr. Simon. "I said 'Mike you could live on \$5 a week, but do you really want to if all you're going to eat is macaroni and cheese? I think that is where he turned his corner and became a foodie after that."

Mr. Kenwood and his wife loved to entertain and cook with family and friends. He really, really liked to eat and cook gourmet meals.

"There wasn't much of a limitation on what they wouldn't try," said Ms. Lobel.

The light of his life was his wife and young daughter, Laney.

Mr. Kenwood adored spending time with his 3-year-old daughter, Ms. Lobel said.

"He just thought she was the most amusing, brightest child ever. He really enjoyed interacting with her."

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Mike Kenwood 1. Saturday, 17 December 2011 10:38
(Erica Gennarini)

I miss him every day. He was a dear friend and wonderful person. I'm very lucky that I got to spend some time with him on the final day before he passed. The outpouring of support and love and recognition is amazing and Michael deserves all of it.

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Remembering and Honoring Michael Kenwood

The Princeton EMT who died while attempting a water rescue last month is remembered by those closest to him.

By [Greta Cuyler](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:30am | [Print](#)

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Michael Kenwood was more than an EMT who died in the line of duty.

He was a husband, father, son, friend, uncle and brother.

He was quiet and introverted, but when he got to know someone, the 39-year-old was funny, smart, caring and giving, his family said.

He liked to read, fish and cook. He loved to watch his daughter play.

He and his 16-year-old niece were "rollercoaster buddies" at Hershey Park and he often quizzed her about boyfriends.

He adored his wife, and they often hosted friends and family with martini and board game nights.

But Michael's life was cut short Aug. 28, when he died after attempting water rescue in Princeton during Hurricane Irene.

The Fateful Day

The call came in to the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad around 4:30 a.m. A car was partially submerged in floodwater on Rosedale Road.

The crew suited up and drove to the scene. It was dark and raining. The water was shin-deep, said PFARS President Peter Simon, who was Michael's partner that day.

Michael's younger brother, Jason Kenwood, said when the crews arrived on scene, they began yelling to anyone who might be stranded inside the car to flash the lights.

And as if on cue, the lights flashed. "They thought it was their signal," Jason said.

The team attached a rope to the rescue truck and tethered Michael and Simon to the rope. Peter took the lead, Michael followed. As the water got deeper and the current stronger, the men realized it wasn't safe to continue and turned around.

"Mike called out that he was losing his footing," said Peter, who immediately stopped and planted his feet so that his partner could stabilize himself. But Michael fell, pulling Peter with him.

As the two men got swept away, the rope connecting them became snagged on small tree- Michael on one side, Peter on the other. Peter shouted to Michael to open his emergency release.

There was no response. Peter took his own knife, cut the rope between the two men and radioed the backup team for help.

EMT Nathan Plough dove into the water and pulled Michael out. CPR began immediately and Michael was rushed to the University Medical Center of Princeton where he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit.

Jason was at home, about six hours away, unable to travel due to the hurricane. He received constant updates by telephone.

"It was certainly one of the longest days I can remember," Jason said. "I didn't want to go anywhere. It didn't help that Gov. Chris Christie said Mike died

when he hadn't."

Michael's father, Martin Kenwood and Martin's wife Anne Gunar and stepsister Lori Felsenstein and her family, were in Dublin, Ireland and unable to return until the next day.

Michael never regained consciousness and died around 10:30 p.m, surrounded by his mother, Sheila Lobel, brother Richard Kenwood, 42, of Burlington Township, and several other relatives. Members of PFARS, including Peter Simon, were also there.

"From what it sounds like, everyone in squad did everything right, but something kept going wrong," Jason said.

It was later determined that the car on Rosedale Road was empty and it may have been an electrical short that caused the lights to flash. Princeton Township Police interviewed the owner of the car but determined there was no criminal action by the driver.

Michael Kenwood's Life

Michael, Jason and Richard grew up in Suffern, N.Y. and moved to Franklin Lakes in Bergen County when Michael was in middle school. Michael was smart and intellectual, his brothers said.

"Growing up, when I wanted to watch TV, Michael was reading books," said Jason. "He would often have a flashlight under the sheet after we went to bed."

He had a small, but close-knit group of friends. In 1994, Martin remarried and Michel gained three stepsiblings: Seth, Staci and Lori.

He graduated from Ramapo High School and moved to Boston to attend Brandeis University, later earning his law degree from Boston University.

He trained as a lawyer and continued to practice law on a part-time basis throughout his life, but Michael was also fascinated with computers from an early age, his family said.

As an adult, he founded Kenwood Technical Consulting in East Windsor where his services included setting up new computers, installing firewalls and setting up network security systems.

Athletic throughout his life, Michael worked out and also liked to ski and snowmobile. And, his family members say with a laugh, Michael enjoyed food. "He exercised and did his thing, but that kid liked to eat," his brother Richard said.

When his father remarried, Michael became friends with his new siblings.

"We were friends, this was a relationship that didn't need familial ties," Lori said.

His life as an EMT

Michael became an EMT following a serious car crash that totaled the car he was riding in and resulted in a wrist injury, Jason said.

"He knew enough to get everyone else out of the car but he still felt helpless not knowing what to do or how to help people," Jason said.

Michael joined the Brandeis Emergency Medical Corps, the first response unit on campus. That's where he met Peter Simon.

"He was a go-to guy, a really solid person," Peter said. "You could rely on him whenever you needed something."

When Michael eventually moved to Mercer County, he told Peter that he wanted to give back to the community. "It was something he really wanted to do, he believed you just don't take from the community, you need to give back," Peter said.

Michael joined the Princeton squad. Eager to get involved, he overhauled the department's computers, set up servers and backups and helped to redesign the department's website.

Michael trained in swift water rescues, extrication and high angle rescues, his father said. "Once he zeroed in on a field of interest, be it computers or rescue squad, he would always want to be an expert," Martin said. "Being mediocre at something was not an option."

As a squad trustee, Michael was tasked with working on member morale, organizing events such as picnics and Friday movie nights.

"There were tons of people who came on a Friday night to hang out and watch a movie together," Peter said. "He really helped to make sure that they're enjoying their time at the squad and if people aren't enjoying their time, they're not going to volunteer their time and enjoy our mission."

The Impact on PFARS

Immediately following Mike's death, PFARS members rallied to help Michael's wife and daughter at their East Windsor home.

Squad members pumped out the family's flooded basement, took away mildewed items and helped dry out other family belongings. They called an electrician when the home's electrical meter began to spark and helped when Michael's widow and toddler had to evacuate the home for several days.

It was one small way the squad could help, Peter said.

He said the squad offered its members time off for grieving and are keeping an eye on members who may need assistance dealing with grief.

"We're trying to help everyone through it, but we have a mission, we have a job to do, the Township, needs us, the Borough needs us, the community needs us," he said.

The squad is back to full service, but they will never forget Michael.

"Michael really was a hero," Peter said. "Not for the way he died, but for the way he lived his life; he was passionate about community service, his squad, his family. He was a model citizen and that's why a lot of our members looked up to him."

A Hero's Tribute

Michael's family says they are overwhelmed by the support since Michael died.

Police escorted the limousines that carried the family to the funeral in Paramus, Martin said. EMT, police and firefighters stood at attention, saluting and crying.

When Michael's mother and stepfather, Sheila and Gary Lobel, ran into traffic en route to the funeral from Fairfield, N.J., a police officer they didn't know turned on his emergency lights and escorted them to the funeral home. He told the couple it was his honor to escort them.

"These people just knew that Michael was a brother in service," Martin said. "The rescue, fire and police community really comes together to care for their own when the occasion arises."

But Michael's father is adamant that Michael wasn't the only hero in Princeton that day.

"Peter Simon is another hero, and the fellow [Nathan Plough] that jumped in the water to pull Michael out when he was floating downstream was another hero," he said. "Those two guys risked their lives and there could have been three fatalities and instead there was just one."

Growing up without a father

The first Sunday after Michael died, the family gathered for his three-year-old daughter's birthday party.

"We were going from a shiva house to a birthday party and then back to shiva," Martin said. "It was tough."

The Kenwood family worries about the toddler who will grow up without a father.

"All the money in the world can't bring back daddy though," Richard said. "At least any money will help her live and flourish in life without daddy."

A trust has been set up to help Michael's widow and daughter. Payments may be made to Friends of Laney Rebecca Kenwood Trust, 66 Witherspoon Street, Suite 219, Princeton, NJ 08543.

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PRINCETON: PFARS members recall Kenwood's contributions

DATE POSTED: Thursday, September 1, 2011 7:53 PM EDT
By Victoria Hurley-Schubert, Staff Writer

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Michael Kenwood

Michael Kenwood was an integral member of the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad. He was an emergency medical technician, a morale trustee, member of several committees and the information technology administrator and an ambulance driver.

"Mike was the kind of guy who would see a challenge, he would meet the challenge, excel at something and then he would say 'great, I'm good at this, what else can I do?'" said Raphael Balsam, Princeton University student member of the squad for the past three years. He and Mr. Kenwood joined and moved through the ranks of the squad at the same time.

"We were working on the same things together and working on getting promoted together," he said. "Since he was someone with life experience — a wife, a child — he definitely knows stuff about that that I don't. He would talk about things like that, he had good insights."

Prior to joining PFARS, Mr. Kenwood served on his college emergency service in Massachusetts, the Brandeis Emergency Medical Corps, a first response unit for his campus.

Mr. Kenwood was like a big brother to the university students, who frequently turned to him for advice, and helped bridge the gap between the student and resident members.

"Sometimes on calls, even with all your EMT knowledge and all of your knowledge until this point isn't adequate, you find yourself in a funny or weird situation and at that point it's good to have longer experience and more life experience," said Mr. Balsam.

He was also a motivator and kept everyone smiling with his humor. "He was someone who knew how to get the mission accomplished while not making it into a chore, not making it painful while having a good time doing it," said Mr. Balsam. "You have to have an attitude like that if you are going to be part of an organization like this for any length of time, otherwise you don't like it and you quit. Mike was the kind of guy who understood how to make what he did here fun."

Patrick DeAlmeida got to know Michael when he joined the squad. "I'm an attorney as well, so we had that in common," he said. "He was very friendly and we became friends quickly."

One word Mr. DeAlmeida used to describe Mr. Kenwood was positive. "He's always smiling, had something good to say and was a positive influence," he said. "Whenever there was turmoil, he was calm he had a level-headed approach to things."

With this positive attitude, and witty humor, he quickly fit right in and became part of the PFARS family. An example of how the squad has bonded as a family came at holiday time when Mr. Balsam, Mr. Kenwood and Peter Simon, PFARS president, all Jewish members of the squad, would volunteer to work the Christmas shift so other squad members could spend time with their families, in addition to helping deck the squad halls.

"Before Christmas, Mike and his wife and little daughter would come help decorate," said Mr. Balsam.

This dedication to his family was apparent to everyone.

"You couldn't describe his dedication to his wife and daughter," said Mr. DeAlmeida. "You could see he loved them both, you could tell they were everything to him. They were his life. I have a memory of him describing to me his daughter dancing (at a community event), he was smiling about that. He was a pleasure to be around."

His dedication to family and cheerful demeanor helped bridge a slight gap in the squad membership — the town and gown volunteers.

"He would always have a nice word and try to tell people: these problems you have aren't as bad as you think they are," Mr. Balsam said. "Here we have a lot of gown

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people and some town people and sometimes there's a little bit of culture shock between the two. Mike was the type of guy who even through he was almost 40, he could hang out with the university students and we could relate to him, he could relate to us. He was a cool guy."

There was another side to the "cool guy's" contributions to PFARS besides the glory work of riding the trucks and responding to emergency calls. Mr. Kenwood took care of the computer systems at PFARS, which are an essential part of the squad's operations, record keeping and patient care, said Mr. DeAlmeida.

"There were times he was unnoticed because he was so quiet and steady," said Mr. DeAlmeida, who has seven years of service with PFARS. "He was always there in the background, especially with the computers. He took care of all of that without mentioning it, to keep it all working for us."

"Our squad members spend a lot of time together in terms of training, meetings and being on duty together," said Greg Paulson, deputy director of PFARS. "When you spend 12, 18, 24 hours at a time together with a small group of people you end up sharing a lot of stories, talking about your families and you become very close. We're

a very tight-knit group and a big family."

The hole Mr. Kenwood leaves will be difficult to fill. "He took a lot of administrative responsibility on his shoulders," said Mr. Paulson, who has volunteered with PFARS since 1994. "He had an IT consulting company, so he did a lot of information technology work for us at the squad — rebuilt our whole network, rebuilt the website and put in a tremendous amount of time. It's going to be very difficult for us to continue without him in that respect because he did so much for the organization. It's going to be difficult to fill in that gap."

"He was great because I am computer illiterate," Frank Setnicky, director of PFARS and a member since 1986. "Anything I had a problem with I just called Mike."

His on-duty hours were only about half of the time he gave to the squad, said Mr. Paulson. "Because of all he did for the squad, it seemed like he had been here much longer than he had," he said. Mr. Kenwood joined PFARS in February 2008.

Mr. Kenwood was a highly trained EMT, with certifications in vehicle extraction, high-angle rescue, ice rescue and swift water recovery. "He pursued all of the additional rescue training very quickly," said Mr. Paulson. "He progressed through the ranks and the training program quickly. He was someone who always sought out the next challenge."

Anyone wishing to honor Mr. Kenwood's memory can make a memorial donation to either Friends for Laney Rebecca Kenwood Trust, 66 Witherspoon St. No. 260, Princeton 08543 or the Michael Kenwood Memorial Fund c/o Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad.

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Brandeis alumnus dies as he attempts rescue during Hurricane

Irene

While trying to save a life, Michael Kenwood '94 gave his own.

The former director of the [Brandeis Emergency Medical Corps \(BEMCo\)](http://www.brandeis.edu/publicsafety/bemco/) (http://www.brandeis.edu/publicsafety/bemco/) died attempting a swift-water rescue during Hurricane Irene on Aug. 28 in Princeton, N.J. He was 39.

Kenwood was remembered as a dedicated family man and committed emergency responder during his funeral on Aug. 31 in Paramus, N.J. Along with family and friends, attendees included more than 100 police, fire and emergency service personnel, New Jersey Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, and Princeton Mayor Chad Goerner.

"Michael is a hero," former BEMCo co-worker Peter Simon '94, the president of the Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad for which Kenwood volunteered, said during his eulogy, "not for how he lost his life, but for how he lived it -- for how he volunteered to make his community better, for how he served our squad, and for how he loved his family and friends."

Simon and Kenwood met while volunteering for BEMCo, which Kenwood led as director in 1993 and '94. They became friends and shared a suite during their junior and senior years. They reconnected when Kenwood relocated to central New Jersey.

"Michael was thoughtful, insightful, intelligent and a straightforward guy," Simon said at the funeral. "No pretenses. No politics. No BS. You could tell when Michael enjoyed something by the smile on his face and the eagerness with which he talked about it. Emergency services was one of the joys of Michael's life."

According to an account in the Times of Trenton newspaper, Kenwood and a fellow member of the rescue squad entered a rapidly rising brook around 4:35 a.m. on Aug. 28 to check on a submerged vehicle, which authorities believed was occupied (it had been abandoned).

As they approached the car, Kenwood and his fellow rescuer were called back to land because the current was too strong, the newspaper reported.

Kenwood was subsequently swept into the current. He was pulled unconscious from the waterway farther downstream and then transported to University Medical Center at Princeton, where he died.

Kenwood had his own company, Kenwood Technical Consulting. He earned a law degree from Boston University. He lived with his wife, Elizabeth Frenkel, and 3-year-old daughter in East Windsor, N.J.

"We are deeply saddened to receive the news that Michael Kenwood, former BEMCo member #125 and alumnus of the Brandeis Class of 1994, lost his life in the line of duty in New Jersey during Hurricane Irene," Paul Schneider '12, BEMCo's director, said in a statement. "Remembering Michael's legacy, we caught a glimpse of his personality and contribution to the organization. It was evident to us that Michael was an exemplary EMT, consistently putting the well-being of others before his own. EMTs such as Michael remind us of why we serve our community in times of emergency. Michael embodied the qualities that all BEMCo members strive to uphold, and we are proud to wear the same uniform that he wore during his service on BEMCo."

Ed Callahan, Brandeis' director of public safety, recalled working with Kenwood. "He was a very dedicated, professional individual who was committed to serving the Brandeis community," Callahan said. "It's a tragic situation."

In May 1990, a few months before enrolling at Brandeis, Kenwood was involved in a car accident that changed the course of his life. He shared the story of his epiphany in a 1993 letter supporting his candidacy to serve as BEMCo's director.

"I will never forget the feeling of fear and helplessness that swept over me as I looked from my two friends, one of whom was unconscious, to the hysterical driver of the other car, to my right wrist, which was deeply lacerated and bleeding heavily," he wrote. "I swore to myself that if I lived, I would learn the skills to care for myself and others should another medical emergency ever confront me again.

"Being a member of BEMCo has been highly significant for me," he wrote in the letter. "From the most basic medical perspective, it's given me the chance to apply and to share my skills as an EMT. Beyond that, I've met some wonderfully talented and dedicated people. Finally, it's given me countless opportunities to grow as an individual."

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"It recognizes Michael's committed devotion to he squad. He took membership to heart and the squad was part of his life. He gave administratively and operationally," said Mr. Simon, who was on the committee that helped establish the award. "(Mr. Kenwood) was a pillar of the organization. It's hard to find people like that and when we find it we want to recognize that."

Mr. Kenwood's squad number was retired and his rescue helmet was presented to the family at the dinner.

The National EMS Memorial Service has, since 1992, been honoring America's EMS providers who have given their lives in the line of duty. The 20 individuals being honored this year join 581 others previously honored by the National EMS Memorial Service.

Each year, at a service held in Colorado Springs, members of the honoree's families are presented with a medallion, symbolizing eternal memory; a U.S. flag that has flown over the nation's Capitol, symbolizing service to the country; and a white rose, symbolizing their undying love.

In addition, each honoree's name is engraved on a bronze oak leaf that is added to the "Tree of Life," the National EMS Memorial.

Michael Kenwood, the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad member who lost his life during a swift water rescue attempt during Hurricane Irene, will be honored at the 2012 National EMS Memorial Service.

Shelia Lobel, Mr. Kenwood's mother, said it is an honor that her son was being recognized posthumously.

"My son's accomplishments through the years have always been significant to me," said Ms. Lobel. "I think it is fitting that he is honored. We do feel that it is fitting to be honored nationally. It's very sad that he had to give his life doing something he felt was very important. We're honored he is being honored."

Mr. Kenwood, a former East Windsor resident, was attempting to reach a submerged car off Rosedale Road in Princeton Township on Aug. 28, 2001, early in the morning at the height of the storm to check if any occupants were trapped inside. It turned out the car had been abandoned.

The national award recognizes EMS personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

"It's very difficult to know that the standard of selecting the awardees is that they have all given their lives, but we know the families and friends, as well as their family of fellow EMS workers, all want to have their fallen brothers and sisters acknowledged, so we understand the significance of the awards," she said.

The service will be held Saturday, June 23, in Colorado Springs.

"We are probably going to be attending," said Ms. Lobel. "I'm compelled to."

Other members of the family may attend as well, she added.

The Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad is "very appreciative" the National EMS Memorial Service recognizing Mr. Kenwood's effort.

"The Princeton squad, the Princeton community and even New Jersey community knew Michael's ultimate sacrifice and it's important to have recognition on the national level," said Peter Simon, president of the squad.

The squad is investigating the cost to make the trip to see if it is in the squad's budget to be able to send representation.

"It is something we want to do and we are going to see if we can make that happen," said Mr. Simon.

Mr. Simon hopes to attend himself as Mr. Kenwood's closest friend. The two had been friends since meeting in college and Mr. Simon was with Mr. Kenwood during the rescue attempt.

Locally, Mr. Kenwood was honored at the squad's installation dinner last month. An award in his honor has been established and Mr. Simon was the first recipient.

"The committee kept that one a surprise," he said. "In my mind we were going to be establishing the award and presenting it to his wife. The committee made the decision to award it to me (without my knowledge)."

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Former Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad EMT Michael Kenwood is being posthumously honored for his sacrifice during Hurricane Irene by the governor's office.

He was among those honored this year with the Governor's Jefferson Award on May 1. Elizabeth Frenkel, his widow, accepted the award at the Newark Museum.

The Jefferson awards recognize the volunteerism of New Jersey residents of all ages and backgrounds who have enhanced the quality of life of their communities through service. This year, more than 1,400 nominations were submitted to honor these outstanding citizens of the Garden State. Twenty were awarded.

"The award recognizes Michael's compassionate, dedicated, and altruistic service to those in need, and we hope it inspires others to find ways to give back to their community," said Peter Simon, president of the rescue squad and Mr. Kenwood's closest friend.

Mr. Kenwood, a former East Windsor resident, was attempting to reach a submerged car off Rosedale Road in Princeton Township on Aug. 28, 2011, early in the morning at the height of the hurricane to check if any occupants were trapped inside. He was swept away in swift currents.

"All of us were deeply impacted by Michael's death. Michael's family lost their beloved son, brother, husband and father," wrote Mr. Simon in the nomination letter submitted by the mayor and Township Committee. "The Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad lost a devoted member and pillar of their organization. And the Princeton community lost a hero who dedicated himself to helping those in need. Though Michael is no longer with us physically, he has left behind a legacy. As others follow his example of helping those in need, our community will continue to reap the benefits of his dedicated altruistic service."

Members of Mr. Kenwood's family were at the Tuesday ceremony, including his mother, Sheila Kenwood Lobel.

"Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno gave a moving short speech about Michael selflessly participating in the attempt to rescue the possible occupants of a partially submerged car. Emphasis was put on the importance of recognizing people from all walks of life to honor them for reaching out to help others in some rather spectacular ways, with the hope that other New Jersey residents who read about them might be inspired to do something for humanity," said Ms. Lobel.

"It is very moving to have Michael recognized. He was one of many who responded during Hurricane Irene, as he and others did, and continue to do so, in order to help people in need. For us, his family, his loss has been overwhelming, and it is very difficult to attend events where he is being honored.

"We know how important it is for us to be there, and appreciate that so many people have taken note and pay their respect to him. I, myself, hope that others are inspired to learn about these recipients and realize that they, too, can reach out in many ways and touch lives."

"Michael Kenwood's selfless legacy will no doubt go on to inspire others to community service for a long time to come," said Lt. Gov. Guadagno. "When his town needed him, Michael was there, like he always was, protecting his neighbors from harm. The term hero is often overused, but in describing Michael Kenwood, hero somehow seems inadequate to fully appreciate his valor and sacrifice."

"He will be missed and his contribution and service to our community will be remembered forever," said Mayor Chad Goerner. "The award is an opportunity to share his legacy with a wider audience — something he truly deserved."

Mr. Kenwood will also be honored at the 2012 National EMS Memorial Service in

Colorado Springs this summer.



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NEW JERSEY STATE

**GOVERNOR'S
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MICHAEL KENWOOD

(1972-2011)

2012 New Jersey State Governor's Jefferson Awards Honoree



Sam Beard (co-founder of the Jefferson Awards), **Kim Guadagno** (Lieutenant Governor/Secretary of State), **Beth Frenkel** and **Linda Bowden** (President PNC Bank New Jersey), **Honoree Michael Kenwood** (right photo)

Award Category:

Hurricane Irene Response

Michael Kenwood was nominated by Mayor Chad Goerner and Princeton Township Committee for his bravery and commitment to volunteerism. A volunteer member of the Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad, Michael was an EMT and rescue technician. He provided compassionate care to patients during their times of crisis. On the morning of August 28, 2011, Michael was a part of a rescue team that responded to a report of a vehicle trapped in floodwaters. Tragically, he drowned when the floodwaters swept him off his feet. Though Michael is no longer here physically, he has left behind a legacy.

The New Jersey State Governor's Jefferson Awards honor ordinary people who, through public service and volunteerism, achieve extraordinary things for other people, their community, their nation, or the environment. To learn more about Michael Kenwood and this year's honorees, please visit nj.com/helpinghands/jeffersonawards



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Remembering EMT Michael Kenwood One Year Later

August 28, 2012



Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno (r) chats with Michael Kenwood's father after the memorial service at Greenway Meadows Park. Guadagno has met with the family before and attended Kenwood's funeral last year.



Princeton Township police officers Mike Cifelli and Robert Toole lead the procession to the service.



The service began and ended with music from a bagpiper.

More than 300 emergency personnel, dignitaries and residents attended the memorial service today to mark the one-year anniversary of the death of Michael Kenwood, the emergency medical technician who lost his life last year after attempting a rescue during Hurricane Irene. The service, held at the Greenway Meadows Park in Princeton Township, was organized by the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad (PFARS).

New Jersey Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno spoke during the service that was also attended by U.S. Rep. Rush Holt, County Freeholders Andrew Koontz and Pat Colavita, Princeton Township Committee members Bernie Miller and Liz Lempert, and Borough Council members Jo Butler and Kevin Wilkes.

Guadagno recalled how Kenwood became interested in becoming an emergency responder after a car accident just a few months before his freshman year at Brandeis University. An injured Kenwood felt afraid and helpless as he looked at his two friends, one of whom was unconscious, and the hysterical driver of the other car. Kenwood swore to himself that if he lived, he would learn the skills to care for himself and others in an emergency. He joined the Brandeis Emergency Medical Corps, later became its

director, and joined PFARS when he moved to the Princeton area.

“He stood up and did something about the situation,” Guadagno said, applauding his courage. She also recalled a conversation last year with Michael’s father, Martin Kenwood, about his son’s death.

“His father said Michael died doing what he wanted to do, and he was the best-trained first responder there could be,” she said.

Guadagno said she hopes Michael’s death will be a catalyst that inspires others to be selfless in their service to their communities. “I hope it gives us all just a little bit more courage...that we do just a little more for others.”

Kenwood was part of a the swiftwater rescue team that was swept away while attempting to reach a submerged vehicle. Kenwood, 39, died from his injuries, leaving behind a wife and young daughter.

The East Windsor resident joined the rescue squad in 2007 and quickly became a vital asset to the organization. In addition to his dedicated volunteer service as an EMT and rescue technician, he served the squad as a trustee and the information technology director. When not volunteering for the squad, he was an accomplished attorney and owner of a technology consulting company.

“He was out go-to guy. You could always count on him,” PFARS Director of Operations Frank Setnicky said. “We will miss him and we will never forget his sacrifice. He loved his family and he loved helping others.”

At the end of the service, a bench on a hill overlooking the park was dedicated in Kenwood’s honor. Next month the squad will also host a tribute concert and fundraiser in collaboration with Broadway Sings to celebrate Kenwood’s life and legacy. [Broadway Sings](#) is a professional concert production company and features stars of Broadway musicals and national touring productions. The performers are donating their talents for the evening of music.

The concert will be held at 7 p.m. on September 23 at the Princeton High School Performing Arts Center. A silent auction also will be held at the event, and bidding will begin at 6 p.m. Items up for bid are expected to include goods and services from local businesses as well as Broadway tickets and collectors items. All proceeds from the event will be split between Kenwood’s family and the Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad. Tickets for the event can be ordered online at michaelkenwood.brownpapertickets.com and will be available for \$30 and \$75. Corporate sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information, visit www.pfars.org, email info@pfars.org, or call (609) 924-3338.



Fire, police and PFARS members turned out in large numbers for the service.



The bench PFARS bought in memory of Kenwood.

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Rep. Rush Holt Co-Sponsors Bill That Would Help Kenwood Family

Written by: [Anne Levin](#)

The death of Princeton First Aid and Rescue Squad (PFARS) volunteer Michael Kenwood last August during tropical storm Irene was a tragedy for his young family. The 39-year-old emergency medical and rescue technician left a wife, Beth, and daughter, two-year-old Laney, as well as extended family members, friends, and colleagues.

This sad situation was compounded when it was revealed that, under current law, Mr. Kenwood's family was not eligible for federal death benefits because he was a volunteer member of a non-profit organization. This did not sit well with Representative Rush Holt [D-12], who has been working on behalf of the Kenwood family and others to change the legislation.

Mr. Holt has co-sponsored the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act of 2012, which passed the House on June 27 and is now pending in the Senate. The bill was introduced on February 14 by Representative Michael Fitzpatrick (R-PA). In his remarks on June 26, Mr. Holt said the legislation would expand federal benefits programs for those who volunteer for fire departments and rescue squads and are injured or killed in the line of duty. "Quite simply, it is the right thing to do," he said. "I am glad to see this bill being brought to the floor and I urge my colleagues to support it today."

It was during the early morning hours of August 28, 2011, that PFARS was called to the scene of a vehicle submerged in raging floodwaters near Rosedale Road, with occupants possibly trapped inside. Mr. Kenwood, trained since college as an emergency worker, entered the water tied to his partner in an attempt to reach the stranded car. When they realized that the current was too strong and tried to turn back, Mr. Kenwood lost his footing and was pulled into the current. He was unconscious and not breathing when he was recovered downstream, and died later that day. The submerged car turned out to be empty.

"Michael's sacrifice would be no different if he had been a member of a paid fire department or EMS agency, and federal law should treat it as such," Mr. Holt said in his remarks. "When he was called to enter those floodwaters, Michael did not stop to think, 'I don't get paid for this — should I do this?' He answered the call just like thousands upon thousands of others do each and every day, risking their lives in the service of others, regardless of whether or not they are paid."

Mr. Kenwood's name was added last month to the National EMS Memorial in Colorado Springs, Colorado. At an annual service there, men and women of the country's Emergency Medical Services who have given their lives in the line of duty are honored and remembered.

"Michael took time away from work, friends, and family to make sure his community was protected and that those in need got prompt, professional emergency medical care," said PFARS President Peter Simon, in an email this week. "Ironically, because the Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad is a non-profit, independent organization, our members do not qualify for the Public Safety Officers Benefit — a flaw with the current program that will hopefully be corrected. We appreciate the efforts of everyone working diligently to see that this bill is championed and passed so that the true heroes of our community, like Michael Kenwood, get the respect they deserve. And more importantly, the families of these fallen heroes get the support they need."

Mr. Kenwood's widow, Beth, said she is thankful for Mr. Holt's efforts. "I am deeply grateful for Representative Holt's support and his dedication to getting the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act passed," she said in an email. "I appreciate Mr. Holt and the many others who continue to remember and recognize the sacrifice Michael made and the ongoing struggles our family faces in the wake of Michael's death."

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