

May 2018

To The Waldwick Chamber of Commerce and
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony D'Augustine,

Thank you for the honor of selecting me as the recipient of the *SSgt Joseph D'Augustine Memorial Courage Award*. I was completely surprised, and humbled, to learn I had been nominated for such an award. Just knowing a little about the *Man* behind this award, (SSgt) Joseph D'Augustine, substantially increases its significance, meaning and value!

Even though he departed this world too soon, (SSgt) Joseph D'Augustine apparently lived a full, remarkable, and exemplary life. He selflessly, and honorably, dedicated himself to serving his country, community, and his fellow soldiers. He distinguished himself, both before and while serving in the Marines, by exhibiting his true character and courageous nature. For his family and friends who knew him best, this is an incomplete portrait of the son, brother, and man they knew. But it speaks volumes to the rest of us about the kind of individual he was. Joseph left (and continues to leave) a great impression on those who knew him, this community, as well as others unbeknownst to us; and now, his impact continues to be felt through his Memorial fund. The *SSgt Joseph D'Augustine Memorial Courage Award* is a wonderful way to remember Joe, to keep his spirit alive, and to continue his legacy while bringing this community together for a worthy cause.

After reading about SSgt Joseph D'Augustine's tours of duty and distinguished service medals, beyond feeling humbled I felt unworthy of such an award. Joseph set a very high standard for anyone to measure against. But I am aware that *Courage* comes in many forms. I've been fortunate to meet and know others in this community that I truly believe exemplify and embody the true spirit of this award. When I accepted this award, I considered myself a representative of all those in our community who, though they may go unnoticed, *courageously persevere* over their own significant personal challenges every day! As for me, I will continue to feel humbled & honored that someone considered me (and my service dog, Kouz!) for such an honorable award. The award, itself, will be a constant reminder of *SSgt Joseph D'Augustine* – the man, his courage & spirit, and the sacrifices he made on our behalf. He's a role model we should all strive to be. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim and Kouz Laughlin

(Over)

PS: while I focused on (SSgt) Joseph D'Augustine when writing this letter, I also seriously contemplated *Police Officer Christopher Goodell*: his life, accomplishments, dedication, sacrifices,... And his scholarship fund that continues his impact on society. He's another extraordinary role model for our society!



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