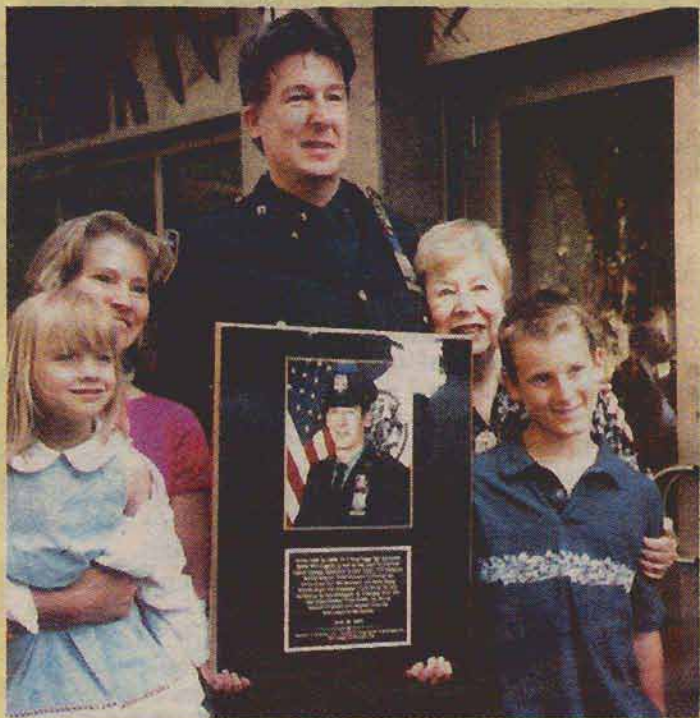


Hero of Kenmore Hotel honored

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Veteran police officer Scott Kimmins (with his family) receives an award for his dedication to the residents of the once infamous Kenmore Hotel on E. 23rd St.

Scott Kimmins, hero of the Kenmore

By Maciej Wroblewski

Local hero Police Officer Scott Kimmins, whose thorough documentation of drug trafficking and related crimes at the infamous Kenmore Single Room Occupancy Hotel on East 23rd Street led to federal takeover of the facility in 1994, was honored during a ceremony in front of Kenmore Hall on Tuesday.

"In September 2004 Police Officer Scott Kimmins will be retiring from the 13th Precinct after 20 years of service and we are honoring him, his service and retirement," said Arlene Harrison, President of the Gramercy Park Block Association, who organized the event with Housing and Services Inc., the 23rd Street Association and Police Officers from the 13th Precinct.

During the ceremony, the organizers unveiled a plaque that will hang in the lobby of Kenmore Hall, honoring Officer Kimmins for his help by renaming the lobby in his name.

"Retiring is going to be bittersweet for me," said Officer Kimmins, who will turn 45 when he retires. "It's been a fantastic 20 years here at the 13th Precinct working with the most dedicated New York City police officers New York has to offer."

Officer Kimmins, who was joined at the ceremony by his wife Jennifer, son Sean and daughter Laura, said leaving is going to be very hard for him. "I love everybody. I love the community and I want to thank you all very, very much."

In 1985 Officer Kimmins was assigned to the Kenmore Hotel as part of his neighborhood beat, quickly realizing that the hotel, with its crime, drug-trafficking and deplorable conditions, would become his main concern. He spent the next 8 1/2 years documenting the problems and working with city agencies on addressing hazardous conditions at the Kenmore.

In those dark years the situation was so bad at the Kenmore that many of the elderly and frail residents and residents with special needs felt prisoners in their own rooms.

"Officer Kimmins made it his personal mission to think of these residents as his own family members who needed his personal protection," explained Harrison. "Many of them would only come out when he was there, and to this day they talk of him as their ray of sunshine during a terrible period," she added.

"Scott Kimmins single-handedly took on the task of helping the people at the Kenmore by trying to rid it of drug activity," said Claire Haaga Altman, President & Founder of Housing & Services Inc., the group charged with providing housing and social services for the hotel's tenants.

In 1994, the Gramercy Park Block Association held a meeting attended by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney who brought with her the newly appointed Police Commissioner William Bratton. Nearly 900 area residents and business owners attended the meeting and the troubled Kenmore Hotel was the only topic discussed that evening.

Following the meeting, Congresswoman Maloney returned to Washington where she brought the issue to the attention of the U.S. Justice Department. Ten days later United States Attorney General Janet Reno personally inspected the halls of the Kenmore, sparking a series of undercover operations, which in three months led to a federal takeover.

"This seizure, the largest asset seizure in the history of the federal government succeeded in large part in such a short time because of the evidence collected and documented by Officer Kimmins," Harrison said.

More importantly, Officer Kimmins made the plight of defenseless Kenmore residents his personal mission, and for that in August 1994 he was honored at a City Hall Ceremony by the United States Attorney General Janet Reno, Governor Mario Cuomo, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

The gratitude of the community and of the city continued on Tuesday as public officials, community representatives, and neighborhood residents, all thanked Officer Kimmins for his outstanding work as a cop and for being a great friend and a wonderful person.

"This is a day to recognize the impact Scott had and has on the people that live in the Kenmore," said Richard Sheiner, former Director of the NYC Office of Emergency Management, who presented Officer Kimmins with a photograph signed by former Mayor Giuliani.

"As soon as I got to the precinct at all the meetings I went to everybody was raving to me about how much they loved Officer Kimmins," said Deputy Inspector Paul McCormack, Commanding Officer of the 13th Precinct since December 2002. "Scottie took charge of his beat and took pride in being in the 13th Precinct and he'd done tremendous work here at the Kenmore."

Deputy Inspector McCormack joked that Officer Kimmins' retirement will leave the precinct with big shoes to fill. "They are size 13 but I mean it in more ways than that," he said. "You've been a tremendous officer and you've been an inspiration for other guys in the precinct. It's been an honor to work with you," he added and presented Officer Kimmins with a Certificate of Recognition from Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly.

Other speakers included Ellen Zimiles, Former US Attorney, Southern District of NY; Hon. Fran Reiter, former Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, who presented Officer Kimmins with a letter of recognition from the NYC Council; Assistant Chief Bruce Smolka, the Commanding Officer of Patrol Borough Manhattan South; Inspector Patrick McCarthy, former Commanding Officer of the 13th Precinct; Sharon Ullman, President of the 23rd Street Association; Michael T. Cohen, President and CEO of Williams Real Estate Co. Inc.; Bob White, a long-time resident of Kenmore.

Kenmore Hall is located at 145 East 23rd Street between Third Avenue and Lexington Avenue.

