

How our organization was created

In early 1987 Staten Island's retired firefighters attempted to form an organization dedicated to the protection of benefits of retired firefighters and their spouses. Unfortunately, due to philosophical differences, it was decided to form two separate groups.

The first, FDNY Retirees, Staten Island Division, was presided over by retired Battalion Chief Tom Fawcett. The second, 10-75 Retired, Staten Island Chapter, with retired Firefighter John Sollazzo as its president. Retired Battalion Chief Carlo Andersen became president of the Staten Island Retirees upon the retirement of Tom Fawcett.

The groups continued separately until their merger in January of 1993. The Merger was precipitated by the formation of the Staten Island Firefighters Memorial Committee. The committee was formed in 1992 at the request of Staten Island Fire Commander Eugene Dockter for the purpose of erecting a Memorial to the Firefighters who lived or work on Staten Island and gave their lives in the line of duty.

The Committee consisted of three members of each group and two active firefighters. The committee consisted of, from the Staten Island Retirees, Carlo Andersen, Dan Peterson, Frank Reinhold. From 10-75 Retire, Bob Pace, as Chairman, John Sollazzo, and Jerry Huntzinger. The active firefighters were, F/F John Wegennar and Lt. Frank Cannizzaro. The Monument was dedicated in May 1993.

It was apparent during the Committee's meetings that the differences of the past had dissolved and the common interest of all of Staten Island's retirees was the paramount issue. A merger committee consisting of from Staten Island Retirees, Bud Hennessy, Jack Lantieri, Charlie McKeever, Frank Murphy and Joe Baeszler and from 10-75 Retired, Bob Pace, Dom Carbonaro and Ed Betts. The Committee met on ten separate occasions at Staten Island Fire Command Headquarters, working on a revised constitution and the logistics of the merger. Cooperation was outstanding at all levels and the merger was a success. The merger was scheduled for January 1993 with both presidents co-chairing until an election to be held in March. The merged organization was named, FDNY Retirees, Staten Island Division.

The first meeting of the combined groups, attended by approximately 200 members, was held at St. Teresa's Church Hall on January 21, 1993. Nominations for office were taken, with the election scheduled for March 18, 1993. At the March meeting John Sollazzo was elected as the first president of the combined groups.