

John G. Centanni

John G. Centanni was born July 25, 1965 in Newark, New Jersey. His parents, John and Pamela, were also born and raised in the North Ward section of Newark. He is the oldest brother to sisters Marlene, Angela, and Cassandra. He is happily married to his wife, Joan, for 26 years with whom they have three children—sons John III (24), Gerard (23), and daughter Ariana (20). John and his family reside in the township of East Hanover.

John always knew as a child he would dedicate his life in the field of fire service and public safety. At the age of 20 in 1986, John began a career with the Newark Fire Department assigned to Engine Co. 6—one of the busiest engine companies in the United States, serving both as a firefighter and captain for nearly two decades. Over the span of his 28 year career, he has risen through the ranks from firefighter, Captain, Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief, Chief of Staff to the Director, and presently serves as the Fire Chief. John spends much of his time in the area of recruitment and mentoring to those desiring a career in fire service and became certified with the State of New Jersey Department of Personnel as a Fire Test Examiner/Monitor. John has served on the Newark Fire Department's Division of Investigation/Arson Unit and advanced his fire service education receiving a wide range of certifications and achieving a New Jersey State Fire Instructor Level 2 Certification. John served for several years on the New Jersey Department of Personnel's Advisory Board to the State Commissioner serving on various committees and subgroups. Currently, John is a member of the Executive Board for the Essex County Fire Chiefs' Association and a member of the State of New Jersey Career Fire Chiefs' Association.

In 1994, he was elected to the Newark Firefighters' Union Board of Trustees and also served from 1996 through 1998 as the Recording Secretary, Executive Board member. In 1997, John was awarded the Newark Firefighters' Union "Unionist of the Year Award" for his dedication and outstanding service.

Over the course of John's career, he received numerous commendations for his firefighting service. Twice in 1992, John received and was honored with "Individual Lifesaving Awards" by the Newark Firefighters' Union. Following his individual honors, he was awarded three Newark Firefighters' Union "Grand Cordon Team Awards" and one "Honorable Service Award". In 1995, he was honored by the Newark City Council for "Courage, Valor and Heroism", and in both 1992 and 1994 was honored by the Police and Firefighters' Insurance Association and welcomed into their "Heroes Hall of Fame".

In 1993, John became the co-founder, charter member and subsequently was elected for two consecutive two-year terms as President of the United Civil Servants Association; a state-wide organization of firefighters, police officers and other civil servant members. In 1998, the United Civil Servants Association honored them with their "Man of the Year Award" for his leadership ability, as well as his enthusiasm and capacity for fundraising toward causes such as St. Barnabas Burn Foundation and St. Barnabas Hospital Valerie Fund. In 2011, John was the Columbian Foundation Honoree receiving the prestigious "Humanitarian and Achievement Award".

In addition to his commitment and service to the Newark Fire Department, he served and continues to serve his community as a volunteer in various capacities. John proudly served as a volunteer for the East Hanover Township Fire Department. In 1997, he was appointed as New Jersey Planning Official for the East Hanover Township Zoning Board of Adjustment where he served for two four-year terms serving as vice-chairperson and chairperson. Since 2008, John served as a Municipal Coordinator/Deputy Coordinator for the Office of Emergency Management. Rounding out his community service, John previously served as a volunteer coach and Major League Director for the East Hanover Baseball Association dedicating himself to many committee positions for nearly a decade.

Ultimately, John prides himself on his many commitments in life; most importantly as a father, family man, friend, firefighter, and his faith in Jesus Christ.