

## Late EMT George Sabourin honored with final radio call

By **Kyle Morel**

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OGDENSBURG — Of the EMT or First Aid Squad members who have served in Sussex County over the past few decades, there is a high probability most received some training by George Sabourin.

“We went into the hospital last Monday. Except for the doctor, he had trained everybody who came in,” said his daughter, Pat Casteel.

Thus, it was only fitting that many of those same emergency responders were present to honor Sabourin, who died Monday at age 84, during a final radio call at the Ogdensburg First Aid Squad building Friday morning.

The ceremony included a procession of Sabourin’s family members and vehicles from a dozen county agencies accompanying his hearse to the First Aid Squad building. He and his widow, Pat, joined the squad in 1973, and the building now bears their name.

Approximately 75 attended the final radio call, traditionally given to first responders who are retiring or have recently died. However, the broadcast cut out after about 30 seconds and could not be restored, prompting Casteel to joke, “That’s my father messing with the radio.”

In addition to his tenure on the First Aid Squad, Sabourin’s resume included more than 30 years as a first aid instructor in Sussex County and at the Bergen County EMS Training Center. He also ran the CPR training program at Newton Medical Center and was heavily involved in the campaign to make automated external defibrillators widely available to the community, according to his obituary.

“He was instrumental in building up the (Ogdensburg First Aid) Squad over the years,” treasurer Alan Arduini said at Friday’s ceremony. “All of these people here, he probably trained at one time or another for something, whether it was EMT courses, CPR. There was a lot of things he taught.”

Sabourin was an honorary member of the Ogdensburg Fire Department and even dressed up as Santa Claus for many years during the Christmas season.

In honor of their service to the local residents, George and Pat Sabourin were named king and queen of the borough at Ogdensburg Day in September 2019.

Tributes to Sabourin have appeared on social media throughout the week praising his impact on many first responders during his career.

“If you are/were an EMT in Sussex County over many years you would have known George as one of the instructors for the EMT class,” reads a [Facebook post](#) from the Hopatcong Ambulance Squad. “George was tough as nails on students but had a heart of gold. All of the many EMTs that worked with him would say he pushed them hard to make them better at going out into the community and giving their all with all the right skills.”

Sabourin’s impact on the community was evident by the turnout Friday morning, a crowd his family was honored to see carry on his legacy.

“These are wonderful people — wonderful people who give back as much as he did,” Casteel said.

Sabourin is survived by Pat, his wife of 63 years, as well as three sisters, six children, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

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