



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
RICHMOND COUNTY

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MICHAEL E. MCMAHON  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

130 STUYVESANT PLACE  
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK 10301  
TELEPHONE (718) 876-6300

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Ryan Lavis (718) 556-7150  
[Ryan.Lavis@rcda.nyc.gov](mailto:Ryan.Lavis@rcda.nyc.gov)

### **D.A. McMahon: Chief Assistant District Attorney Paul Capofari Receives Prestigious Morgenthau Award**

*\*\*Distinguished honor acknowledges Capofari's devotion to justice and public safety\*\**

Staten Island, NY – Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon today announced that Chief Assistant District Attorney Paul A. Capofari has been honored with the prestigious Robert M. Morgenthau Award.

The District Attorneys Association of the State of New York presented the distinguished honor to Capofari during a ceremony held Friday at the association's 2018 Winter Conference in the Grand Hyatt, Manhattan.

“Chief Assistant District Attorney Paul Capofari has devoted his life to upholding the law and ensuring fair and equal justice for the people of Staten Island,” said **District Attorney Michael E. McMahon**. “His years of military service in the U.S. Army were instrumental in helping my administration to establish the borough's first dedicated Veterans Court part, which has flourished under his leadership and allowed his fellow veterans to connect with much-needed resources. He is tireless in his efforts to guide and mentor ADAs in the office to seek the strongest and most ethical prosecution possible in order to hold criminals accountable for their actions and protect victims. Staten Island is truly fortunate to have him fighting on their side, and I want to offer my sincerest congratulations on this well-deserved award.”

Paul Capofari, a native Staten Islander, is a 1972 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. For part of his career in the Army, Capofari was attached to the Judge Advocate General's Corps, where he was assigned to various posts throughout the United States. One of those assignments was at the Pentagon, where he drafted the Army's AIDS policy, while another was at the Office of the White House Counsel during the trials in the Iran-Contra affair. Later in his military career, Capofari returned to West Point to teach constitutional law. During his time in the Army, Capofari attended New York Law School, where he graduated cum laude in 1980.

After 21 years of service to his country, Capofari was honorably discharged in 1993 at the rank of Lt.

Colonel. Soon thereafter, Capofari was appointed an Assistant District Attorney in the Richmond County District Attorney's Office. During the course of his service in the DA's Office, Capofari prosecuted a wide range of cases that included: members of a drug ring that were responsible for the yearly importation of 50 kilograms of cocaine to Staten Island; two police officers convicted of official misconduct and later dismissed from the NYPD for their role in a multi-million dollar car theft ring; various homicide prosecutions; a local builder who ordered a 15-foot deep trench dug without any proper reinforcement that resulted in the death of one worker and the injury of another; lead counsel in the 2003 multi-defendant state prosecution of *Ronell Wilson*, who assassinated two undercover police officers, and who was ultimately convicted in federal court. Capofari's 19 year career included assignments in the Investigations Bureau, the Criminal Court Bureau as a Deputy Bureau Chief, and ultimately as the Chief of the Supreme Court Bureau, where he supervised ADAs in the prosecution of felony offenders. In 2012, Capofari left the District Attorney's Office to establish a law firm on Staten Island with his son.

After working 3 years as an admired member of the criminal defense bar, in 2016, DA McMahon asked him to join his new administration as Chief Assistant District Attorney. Since rejoining the DAs' Office, Capofari has led the charge in executing DA McMahon's vision regarding key criminal justice initiatives: the creation of a Veterans Treatment Court; emphasizing the training and development for our prosecutors to increase their trial skills; overseeing the substantial upgrading of the office's internal case management system; overseeing the creation of the HOPE program, which diverts those eligible offenders arrested for misdemeanor drug offenses towards treatment; overseeing the creation and administration of the Overdose Response Initiative "ORI", which treats scenes of drug overdoses as crime scenes, with the investigation and collection of evidence.

Capofari met his wife Sharon in high school; they live on Staten Island, have four grown children and eleven grandchildren.

The District Attorneys Association of the State of New York established the Morgenthau Award in 2009. Its name is derived after the illustrious Manhattan district attorney and is presented every year to four assistant district attorneys from four designated regions of the state, each of whom exemplify Morgenthau's high standard of honesty, integrity, and commitment to justice.

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