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Retired Firefighter Who Worked At Ground Zero Dies Without 9/11-Related Honors, Benefits

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NEW YORK (WCBS 880) -- A hero firefighter who aided in the aftermath of 9/11 died in a mental hospital without ever receiving benefits.

The final farewell on Saturday for 63-year-old Joseph Battista at St. Dominic's church came without the usual ceremony of a World Trade Center funeral.



The Bronx native died earlier this month in a Florida mental hospital. For years, doctors had linked his PTSD and severe depression to his three months at Ground Zero and the horrific Happyland Social Club fire in 1990.

"He was suffering from lots of demons," Battista's attorney, Jeffrey Goldberg, said. "He had moved to Florida and started suffering from depression and anxiety and he was in and out of hospitals."

A cousin tells [The Daily News](#) that Battista's request for compensation was denied at least four times by the FDNY medical board, which deemed his illness was the result of early onset dementia.

In the end, Battista was also denied a funeral with honors because he died choking on a piece of food, which is not a covered cause of death, [The Daily News](#) reported.

The FDNY declined to comment on Battista's fight for benefits saying it does not disclose the medical records of its members.

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