



## HISTORY LESSONS

BY RICHARD ACRITELLI

# Jeff Brett: A 'King' for Always Helping Vital Social and Economic Long Island Programs

"One of the finest citizens and business leaders that you will ever meet. Jeff Brett is a gentleman who cares deeply for the people of Long Island. Rocky Point VFW Post 6249 greatly appreciates his charitable donation of a new roof for our installation and the siding and windows for the expansion of our post's World War II and Military History Museum. He is a special man who has a long tradition of trying to make Long Island into a better place."

These were the recent words of VFW Post 6249 Commander Joseph A. Cognitore toward the willingness of Brett's business King Quality to support Long Island in numerous ways. A longtime resident from Port Jefferson who was born at St. Charles in 1965, Brett has spent his life in this town. Always armed with a big smile and a can-do attitude, Brett was a talented wrestler, who enjoyed attending camps at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. A successful grappler, Brett was on the Port Jefferson teams that competed at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., against some of the toughest teams on Long Island. Brett ran through the hills, jumped rope, and was always doing calisthenics to stay in shape. As a high school senior in 1984, Brett placed second in Suffolk County and for two years, he wrestled at Ithaca College at 177-pound weight class.

After two years in college, Brett left school and enjoyed working for a construction crew in Vermont. Early on Brett also learned business lessons from his father who installed and repaired heating and cooling systems. These ideas focused on the belief that customers should always be treated like your friends, to always put in an honest day's effort, and finally, treat the home or business owner as if they are your lifelong customers. Brett follows the wrestling statement, "The harder I work, the luckier I get." These words were officially implemented through the establishment of "King Quality" in 1992.

Almost 31 years ago, Brett began installing new siding, windows, doors, and roofs mostly on existing homes, businesses, and community centers. From the beginning, Brett demonstrated a tremendous work ethic that currently has his company finishing up to 20 home improvement jobs a day and over 100 a week on Long Island,

Westchester, and in Syracuse. He has a staff of almost 200 workers that are installation crews, salespeople, inventory, secretaries, and delivery trucks. Offering services to smaller homes, condominiums, and mansions, no job is too small, nor too big.

King Quality has always strived to meet the root standards that were fostered by his father, as Brett's goal is to continually provide superior customer service and is recognized as a GAF 3 Star Presidential recipient. For eight years, King Quality has widely earned high-status awards, and it is the only business from this industry to gain this proud business distinction. Through his immense growth, Brett offers his customers the option of providing no money down and fair interest rates to finance their construction costs to King Quality.

This local business leader is determined to utilize the best products for his customers such as the "King Wall Siding." Brett identifies the strength of this material to make homes warmer, prevent insects, and to deter thermal bridging. King Quality guarantees that this home feature will never fade, crack, or blow away, and this company constructs windows with custom frames and glass that is double strength with a 2025 Energy Star Rating.

Since King Quality was established, it has met the needs of over 75,000 customers. Outside of ensuring outstanding customer service, Brett is an emerging philanthropist. Recently, he agreed to provide a new roof and new copper flashing for the chimney at VFW Post 6249. Brett's workers will remove the old roof and give a 50-year warranty on this donated job that in his words "will provide a peace of mind for a lifetime for the veterans of this post."

Brett will also donate the new siding and windows for the VFW Post 6249 Suffolk County World War II and Military History Museum that will hopefully be expanded soon. Right away, Brett was enthused by the military history in this museum and the prospects of expanding the size of this special local learning site. For years, Brett has been an avid reader, loves going to museums, enjoyed visiting the Battle of Yorktown, is interested in local military history, and he would like to visit the World War II beaches

at Normandy, France. Working for King Quality, Brett has about 20% of his employees who are military veterans and his Westchester general manager is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. A true patriot, Brett believes, "there would be no King Quality and little else, without the constant sacrifices of the United States Armed Forces. I am extremely proud and thankful of my own employees' efforts to protect this nation."

Over the last several decades, Brett has had numerous family members who were members of the Armed Forces. During World War I, his grandfather was from Brooklyn, and in the army on the Western Front, he survived a mustard gas attack in France. He later received rehabilitation at Port Jefferson High School, where he met a young USO lady, who eventually became his wife. Brett's father served in the navy during World War II and his Uncle Eddy fought in the army through the harsh fighting at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. And when they were done with their enlistments, they returned home and were local leaders within the American Legion.

For years, Eddy suffered from PTSD, and he worked at the Carriage House Museum in Stony Brook. His Uncle John fought in Korea and his Uncle Richie was sent to South Vietnam. And since 9/11/01, Brett has three nephews who enlisted during the War on Terror. Jason Spence is an army warrant officer, works in the Pentagon, and handles sensitive security details. Shane Spence was a combat marine, who was deployed overseas, maintained military helicopter hydraulics, and his third nephew, Colin Cash honorably served in the army.

For many years, he demonstrated an immense amount of leadership to help guide necessary programs on Long Island, where Brett has given over \$500,000 to a multitude of vital causes. For the last 10 years, his corporation created "King Quality Cares," and they have given turkey's to the needy in different locations

around Long Island. During the holiday season, Brett is one of the key leaders behind "Christmas Magic." His company has sponsored commercials for this special program to provide holiday gifts and joy to the unfortunate. Brett is a proponent of recognizing the concerns of domestic violence on Long Island, where he ran commercials to present awareness to this issue. After watching these commercials, local centers went from receiving 60 calls a day to 600 to handle this growing problem. And closer to his home, Brett has given 1,000 "King Quality" pink hoodies to sponsor the Port Jefferson's John T. Mather Memorial Hospital's "Breast Cancer Walks" and he is also on the board of this major medical location.

Since the early 2000s, Brett has been a major supporter of Father Frank's Hope House in Port Jefferson. King Quality has donated eight new roofs, siding, and windows to help attend to the major social and economic mission of this well-known facility. For his extreme amount of compassion, Brett was recognized as the "Hope House Man of the Year." Since 1971, the LoNigro family has owned Port Jefferson Sporting Goods and over the last several years they have operated Trophy Hut out of Rocky Point. For 40 years, Bobby LoNigro has been friends with Brett and has always seen this person as a positive figure. He observes that Brett is a "huge help towards Hope House, is an extremely charitable business owner, and he never wants attention towards his donations. This good man is willing to support a multitude of charities."

Brett is a board member for Habitat for Humanity and has donated roofs to this national organization that is driven to assist people find and build suitable homes with affordable mortgages. Two years ago, Brett, along with Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine were celebrated for their efforts to carry out this organization's mission. Last summer, Brett had a team of King Quality workers install a new roof on a Vietnam War veteran's home in Riverhead. Watching this

construction team work on his new residence, this veteran was overjoyed with emotion as King Quality installed this vital part of this house. This is just one of the many stories of hope that Brett and his company has provided over the years to always help others.

A strong proponent of helping people with disabilities, Brett has connected with the founders of "John's Crazy Socks" John Lee and his father Mark X. Cronin. King Quality has worked with the Cronin's to endorse commercials to promote the goals of this business to sell "colorful and fun socks to present happiness." Helping this important charitable company, Brett is extremely pleased when speaking about John's Crazy Socks that has raised over \$600,000 for the Special Olympics, National Down Syndrome and Autism Societies of America. Expanding his support for people with disabilities, Brett has paid for Arts Humanities and Research Council (AHRC) commercials for the Wheatley Farm and Arts Center in Brookville. This unique spot unites people of all abilities with nature and animals for its visitors to enjoy. Brett is proud of his efforts within AHRC and views his connection to this dynamic initiative as the necessity of "energizing communities."

From his support of Rocky Point VFW Post 6249's structural needs for its main building and museum to countless programs across Long Island and Westchester, Brett has always been a quiet leader to care for others. This busy roofing, windows, and siding operation is one of the finest of its kind in the northeast and King Quality has enhanced the value of utilizing personal and business involvement to advance social, economic, and veterans' causes. Town of Brookhaven Councilwoman Jane Bonner summed it up best, "Brett's generosity and commitment to our citizens and veteran's causes has been truly remarkable. Our community is grateful for his devoted and continued leadership that is unwavering to aid these much-needed programs."

## Local Leaders Lobby...

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"I've stood with my law enforcement colleagues from across the state to advocate for closing this dangerous loophole," she said, "and again, urge our legislature to include proposed fixes to our drugged driving laws in this year's budget."

This legislation codifies multiple safeguards: the best available science, roadside drug screening,

expanded toxicology testing and specially trained officers to record the physical effects of substances via "body-cam."

If all goes according to plan, this could yield the swiftest determinations one could ask for during an era where many crime pressers could cease to be if bail law was as reformed as drugged driving language seeks to be in 2025.

## NYSDOT Commissioner Provides...

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"They're our family members, they're our team members, they're our collaborators, and they deserve protection," Dominguez added.

"They want to go home to their families every night just like we do."

Dominguez and Herbst lauded the 2-year-old automated speed zone safety camera systems that some critics initially called a "cash grab," but Dominguez considers a "safety grab."

No grave injuries or incidents of suffering have been reported within the freeway areas that cameras have been assigned to—a

stark contrast to the fatalities tallied prior to their installation due to the prolific presence of reckless speedsters and physically violent drivers.

Dominguez does, however, recall their cameras clocking someone traveling at a whopping 139 mph within just 45 minutes of the program's implementation.

Herbst cites the fate of Raymond Hurt—a day-and-night Portion Road flagger who was murdered by an upset driver he refused to let pass through a work area—as a tragic reminder for all involved to do right by their workers at all times.

"That deserves penalty," Herbst demands. "That worker should be protected. The mere threat should be a felony. That's what this legislation is calling for."

"Can't we protect our workers from people who are violent and make sure the legal system can prosecute them appropriately?"

"Not only do they deserve our respect and admiration," Dominguez said of transportation workers, "but they deserve our thanks."

And thanks, as intimated, is just the half of it, in an industry where safety isn't just key—it's an utmost priority.