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Cop who worked at Ground Zero dies of brain tumor

October 11, 2009 By ZACHARY R. DOWDY zachary.dowdy@newsday.com

QUICK SUMMARY Robert Grossman, an officer who rushed to Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001, passed away Friday.



Photo credit: Newsday/Photo by James Carbone | As fellow police officers carry the casket of fallen officer Robert Grossman out of Temple Beth Shalom, his mother Harriet Epstein and his stepfather, Morton Epstein, follow. (October 12, 2009)

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Ground Zero immediately after 9/11

Everybody knew when [New York Police Department](#) Officer Robert Grossman of [Rocky Point](#) reported to work - and not because they couldn't miss the hulking man that he was.

His gregarious personality loomed large over the 28th Precinct in Harlem, where he worked since graduating from the Police Academy in 1994. He was always the jokester, making battle-tested cops laugh as he walked into the building and lifting their hearts a little as they went about crime-fighting in the big city.

>>PHOTOS: [Click here to see photos from Robert Grossman's funeral](#)

No one was surprised to find the [Port Jefferson Station](#) native among the hundreds of officers, firefighters and volunteers who rushed to Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001, to save lives - even though it was his day off.

But it was that very sacrifice that may have killed him eight years after two planes crashed into the World Trade Center. Grossman developed a brain tumor that his family and his physician said he got from reporting to the contaminated site for weeks on end and inhaling the toxic fumes.

He died on Friday at a [Port Jefferson](#) hospice. He was 41.

Although many first responders and their relatives said they were sickened after working at or near Ground Zero, New York City officials have stopped short of acknowledging that the air quality in lower [Manhattan](#) after 9/11 was unsafe.



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Grossman, who worked only at the Harlem precinct where he landed after trying his hand at teaching in a [Brooklyn](#) high school, split his time between the city and his home.

"He worked in Harlem at the 28th and yet he had a place out here in [Rocky Point](#)," said Morton Epstein, his stepfather. "He loved them and he loved working there and his home. He liked the openness here in [Suffolk County](#)."

Grossman graduated from Comsewogue High school, and enrolled at [Stony Brook University](#), where he earned a bachelor's degree in liberal arts and a master's degree in education, specializing in social studies.

He took those academic skills to Sarah J. Hale High School in [Brooklyn](#), where he taught for three years before becoming a police recruit.

In 1995, he got married. He and his wife, Carla, have a 6-year-old son, Noah.

In April 2006, Grossman noticed numbness on his face as he was shaving one morning, the first sign of the onset of the cancer that he would battle for several more years, Epstein said.

Besides his wife, son and stepfather, Grossman is survived by his mother, Harriet Epstein; his father, Stephen Grossman of [Bohemia](#); his stepmother, Shelly Grossman of [Bohemia](#); four sisters, Joanne Epstein of Douglaston, Judith Pepper of [West Palm Beach](#), Fla., Suzanne Sokolov of Auburndale and Teri Barbee of Silver Spring, Md.; and three brothers, Mitchell Epstein of Kings Plaza, [Brooklyn](#), Jeff Feuer of [Port Jefferson Station](#) and Andy Feuer of [Levittown](#).

Funeral services were held Monday at 10:30 a.m. at Temple Beth Sholom in [Smithtown](#). Burial followed at Washington Memorial Park in [Mount Sinai](#).

>>PHOTOS: Click here to see photos from Robert Grossman's funeral

>>PHOTOS: LI remembers 9/11

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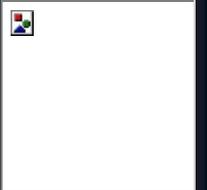
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