Mayor's Award Text

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Mayor Frederick M. Kalisz Jr.

The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard takes great pleasure in presenting the United States Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award to Mayor Frederick M. KALISZ Jr. for his extraordinary commitment to preserving unique symbols of the City of New Bedford's rich maritime heritage. Noting the woeful state of disrepair at many of the city's nautical landmarks, Mayor KALISZ initiated innovative programs to reclaim these landmarks in order to provide meaningful public displays of the city's link to the sea, and to establish the nation's only memorial to lightship sailors. Thanks to his leadership, New Bedford now has a fitting memorial honoring the 25 lightship crewmen who perished in the line of duty when the Lightships VINEYARD, NANTUCKET, and CROSS RIP succumbed to the ravaging sea. As a symbol of the lives of the fallen lightship crewmen, Mayor KALISZ arranged to incorporate the bell recovered from the wreck of the

Lightship VINEYARD as the centerpiece of the Lightship Sailor's Memorial, located at New Bedford's Waterfront Park. Equally creative was Mayor KALISZ's work that led to the renovation and re-lighting of Butler Flats Lighthouse, Palmer Island Lighthouse, and Clarks Point Lighthouse. Though time and vandals had exacted a toll on these long abandoned lighthouses, Mayor KALISZ refused to allow them to be dismantled or go to waste. Through extraordinary leadership and vision, he brought local, federal, and non-profit organizations together in a committed effort to rehabilitate and care for these sites so they would once again light the way for all mariners. Not deterred by a lack of funding, Mayor KALISZ authorized an innovative fund raising effort that utilized an advertising campaign to subsidize the restoration costs. Aided by the Bristol County Sheriff's Department and the City of New Bedford's Office of Tourism and Marketing, Mayor KALISZ's vision for unique symbols of New Bedford's maritime heritage have become a reality. Future generations will benefit from a deeper understanding of how our nation's lighthouses and lightships guided a safe course for

seafarers, and the many sacrifices made by the crews who manned them. Mayor KALISZ's dedication and superior accomplishments are heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of public service.