



Submitted Photo
From left to right: Paul Mejchrzak, Blake Mitchell, Abigail Ferreira, Azriel Rivera, Superintendent Mike Ginestre, Senator Cathy Young, David Tenpas, Ivy Yokom, Lexus Eschenbach, Iron Rivera, head bus driver David Maleski. The students pictured were on the bus at the time of the fire.

Sherman bus driver recognized following January fire

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SHERMAN — David Tenpas, a Sherman bus driver credited with helping to safely remove 12 students from a bus in January shortly before it burst in flames, was honored by state Sen. Cathy Young on Friday.

Tenpas was presented the New York State Senate Liberty Medal during an assembly at Sherman Central School. The student body was gathered, including those who were on the school bus dur-

ing the Jan. 4 fire on Parker Road.

"To everybody who was on the bus, thanks for your cooperation," Tenpas said.

He admitted practicing fire drills are disliked among students, but used the incident as an example of why they're important. "Obviously, there's a reason they're there," he said.

Young described the magnitude of the Liberty Medal to those gathered inside the auditorium, calling the circumstances

"very, very special."

"The person who gets such award has to do something exemplary, something outstanding," Young said. "And that's what Mr. Tenpas was able to do."

Tenpas stopped his bus after being alerted to a problem with the brakes. Students were moved to another bus, and shortly thereafter the vehicle was engulfed by flames. The fire was extinguished by members of the Stanley Hose Fire Co.

The Liberty Medal Award was

created in 2000 and is similar to the Congressional Gold Medal. The award — one of the highest civilian honors a New York resident can receive — is given to those who have "exemplified exceptional, heroic or humanitarian acts and achievements on behalf of New York residents," Young said.

As Young placed the medal on Tenpas, students and staff at Sherman Central School gave him a standing ovation.

The New York State Senate

unanimously voted to pass a resolution that honored Tenpas on Jan. 23, the state senator said.

"What that means is that this resolution becomes part of the permanent New York state history and record," Young said.

Young joked that having every senator vote in approval of the resolution is rare. "When does that happen, right?" she asked. "We are just so proud of Mr. Tenpas. We just wanted to say, from our hearts, thank you so much."