

The Star-Ledger

Murphy honors widow of murdered Jersey City officer during State of the State

By Blake Nelson

NJ Advance Media for NJ.com and The Star-Ledger

Published Jan. 14, 2020

At the beginning of Tuesday's State of the State address, Gov. Phil Murphy honored the widow of the Jersey City detective killed last month before the kosher market shooting.

Joseph Seals, 39, was a "heralded police detective," Murphy said. "If ever there was a time for us to recognize the bravery and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, it was that day."

Laura Seals sat a few feet away in all black. To her right was Jersey City Police Chief Michael Kelly, and to her left First Lady Tammy Murphy. When the governor asked Seals and others affected by the shooting to stand, the packed room gave them a standing ovation that lasted for more than 30 seconds.

Kelly put his arm around Seals' shoulders, and she nodded and smiled at lawmakers, her hands clasped in front of her.

"It's gonna take a long time to get over losing Joe," Kelly told NJ Advance Media after the speech. "He was just a tremendous human being."

On Monday, federal investigators said Joseph Seals likely thwarted a much larger plot.

U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito said the exact details of Seals' interaction with the shooters, David Anderson, 47, and Francine Graham, 50, may never be known. However, Carpenito said what was "likely a chance encounter" may have saved "dozens, if not more lives."

"We believe that he threw Graham and Anderson off of, what we're piecing together now, was likely a broader plan," Carpenito said.

In addition to his wife, Joseph Seals is survived by five children.