

2 get \$900G from fire dept.



New Hyde Park unit settles suit by father, son

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A former New Hyde Park fire commissioner and his firefighter son received a \$900,000 settlement from the fire department after they said the department damaged their reputations by having them wrongfully arrested on theft charges.

For Michael Dolan and his son, Michael Jr., the settlement announced Tuesday marked the culmination of a six-year legal battle to clear their names.

"I can hold my head high again," Michael Dolan Sr. told reporters at the Carle Place office of his attorney, Rick Os-

trove of Leeds Brown Law.

His son, sitting beside him, added, "You can't just lock somebody up because you don't like them."

Fire department officials did not respond to requests for comment.

Michael Dolan Sr., 74, was a fire commissioner and Michael Dolan Jr., 35, was a department volunteer when fire commissioners accused them of stealing 65 Kidde smoke detectors in 2012 from a secure room in the firehouse. Police charged each with grand larceny in the third degree.

The father, also a volunteer for the department, said they had taken the smoke detectors home for safekeeping after several disappeared. The Nassau County Firefighters Museum and Education Center had provided the smoke detectors to be distributed for free to senior citizens. The men said they returned the smoke

detectors to the firehouse, but then gave them back to the fire museum when they started disappearing again.

Dolan Sr. said he and his son were targeted by some commissioners after he wanted the firehouse to stop selling alcohol in its clubroom.

The Nassau County district attorney's office dropped the charges after a few months, but the fire commissioners began legal proceedings to remove the men as members.

The Dolans responded by filing a federal lawsuit against the New Hyde Park Fire District and several commissioners for malicious prosecution and abuse of process. Years of court fights took place.

A year ago, a federal jury awarded \$625,000 in damages to the Dolans. The men eventually received another \$275,000 for their legal expenses after negotiations with the fire department.

▶ WATCH VIDEO

Michael Dolan Sr. and Michael Dolan Jr., of New Hyde Park, at their attorney's office in Carle Place on Tuesday. Video: newsday.com/nassau