

Bay Shore man recalled at vigil

■ 2008 death in police custody marked by crowd

■ Kenny Lazo's case a focus in call for police reform

BY SCOTT EIDLER

scott.eidler@newsday.com

Thirteen police officers stood silently outside the Bay Shore precinct yesterday as nearly 100 demonstrators — barred from entering the site — protested what they described as police misconduct.

The crowd gathered to remember Kenny Lazo, of Bay Shore, on the seventh anniversary of his death and to call for police reforms. Suffolk County police had been chasing down Lazo, 24, during a traffic stop when he attempted to reach for an officer's gun, police said at the time. Officers struck him with metal flashlights, and he collapsed at the Third Precinct and was pronounced dead a short time later, police had said.

The family blames police for Lazo's death, but the officers said they acted defensively. A grand jury did not indict them, and a police probe found the officers acted appropriately.

A lawsuit seeking \$55 million in damages is to be argued in court this summer, said family attorney Frederick K. Brewin-

ton of Hempstead.

Other families from across the state had joined to remember their loved ones who they say died wrongly at the hands of the authorities. At the vigil, they called for law enforcement reforms; one sign read: "Training Is Not Enough."

Tension among police and communities has grown heated across the country after the past year's events in Staten Island and Ferguson, Missouri, where the deaths of unarmed black men drew national attention. Those in attendance yesterday mentioned the arrest last week of a South Carolina police officer in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black man.

Jennifer Lazo, 29, who had a son, Kenny Jr. — now 12 — with Kenny Lazo, cited the South Carolina shooting. She lamented the lack of video evidence of Kenny Lazo's death.

"If the video footage wasn't there, the officer probably would have been let go and not charged," said Jennifer Lazo,

who lives in Brentwood.

A Suffolk County police spokeswoman said the department doesn't comment on pending litigation.

Protesters at the four-hour event yesterday sought to attract the attention of the police officers, but they did not react. One was stationed on top of the precinct while another appeared to record video of the event.

Among the mourners was Richard Artura, whose brother-in-law Daniel McDonnell, 40, of Lindenhurst, was killed in a struggle with police in 2011. McDonnell's relatives in January urged the state attorney general to investigate.

The group walked along Fifth Avenue in Bay Shore, handing out fliers.

At the end of the ceremony, mourners remembered departed relatives and friends by affixing wooden crosses with their names to poles supporting a large precinct sign.

Supporter Lucas Sánchez said the vigil reminds Long Islanders that law enforcement issues discussed prominently are similar to ones occurring on the Island. "It's not just about the national stories," he said.

SHARPTON IN SOUTH CAROLINA

A39



Nearly 100 people attended a vigil yesterday at the Third Precinct in Bay Shore for Kenny Lazo on the seventh anniversary of his death. The family blames Suffolk County police for Lazo's death.