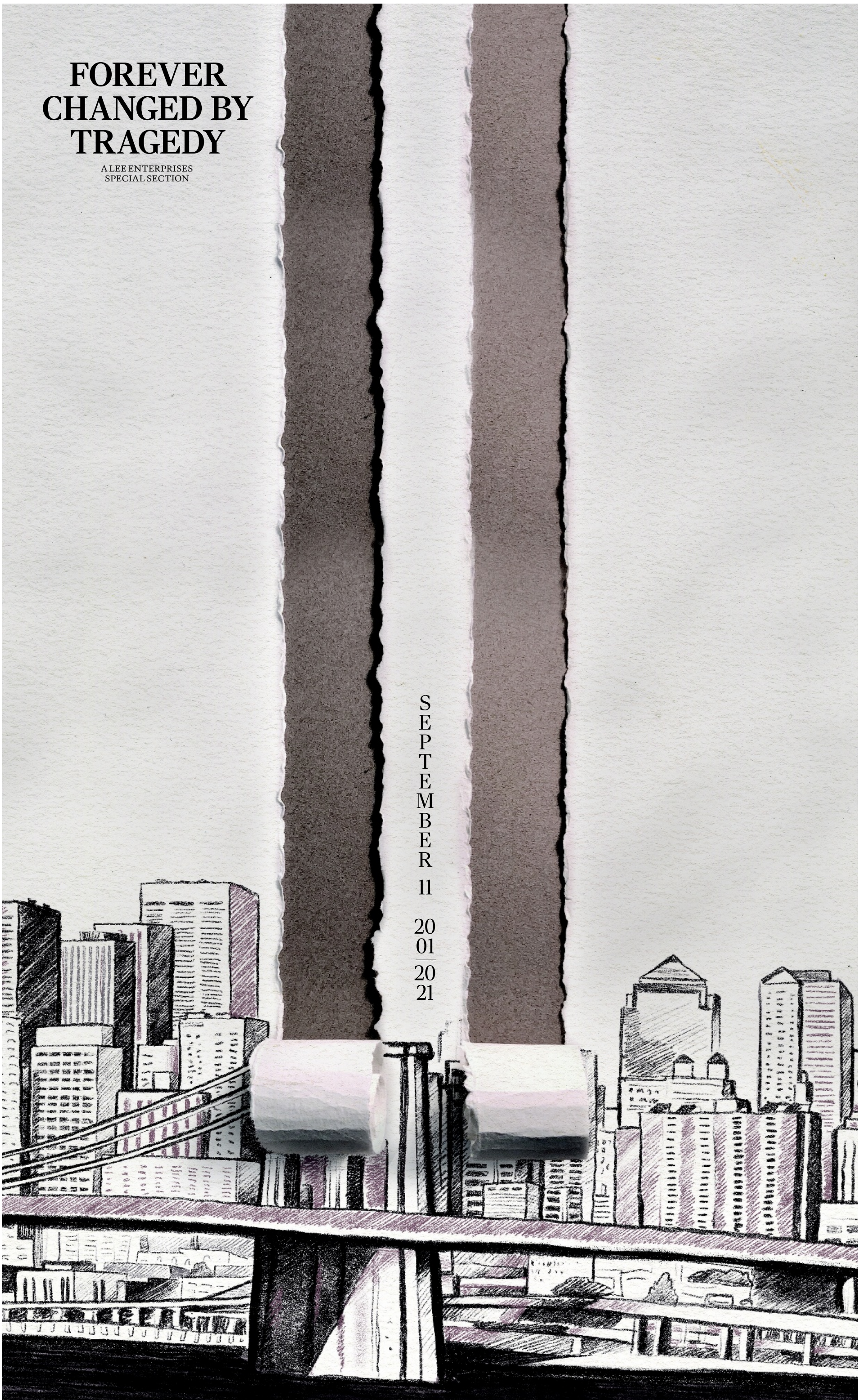
FOREVER CHANGED BY TRAGEDY

A LEE ENTERPRISES
SPECIAL SECTION

SEPTEMBER 11
2001
2021



TWO DECADES AFTER 9/11, WE MUST NOT LET THE ENEMY WITHIN TEAR US DOWN

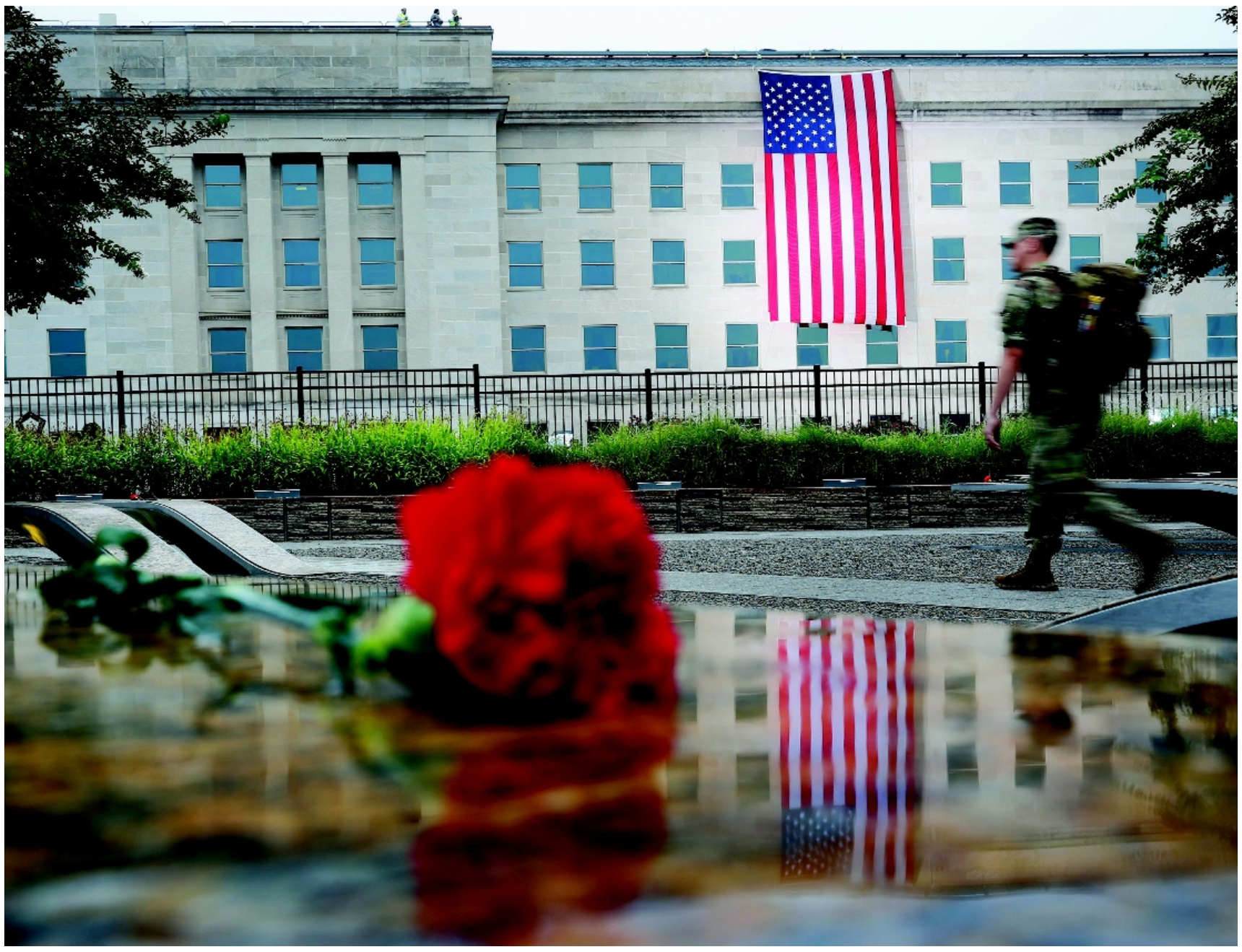
An essay by Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Paul Williams examines why it's time to re-establish who we are as a nation. Page 2

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Communities erect memorials and museums – and vow to 'never forget'
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JACQUELYN MARTIN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A U.S. flag is draped on the side of the Pentagon, where a plane was crashed by terrorists Sept. 11, 2001. The flag is seen from the Pentagon Memorial on the anniversary of the attack in 2015.

Reclaim our unity

Hope, optimism fuel healing despite nation's current deep divisions

MICHAEL PAUL WILLIAMS
Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch

On this day 20 years ago, Democrats and Republicans gathered in grief and resolve on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

"When people perpetrate acts against this country, we as a Congress and as a government stand united, and we stand together," said House Speaker Dennis Hastert, moments before the group burst into a spontaneous singing of "God Bless America."

It was a show of unity for a traumatized nation, desperate for solace in the aftermath of an unimaginable attack.

Now, we're splintered in ways we never would have predicted. The terrorism we feared from outside our nation is being birthed, bred and fed from within. Our country, which withstood a multi-pronged assault plotted by Osama bin Laden, staggers today from self-inflicted wounds.

As we pause today to reflect upon the loss of life and our sense of impregnability, it's time to re-establish our sense of collective purpose.

We will never forget the nightmare of airplanes flying into the World Trade Center, or those towers disintegrating before our eyes; the scorched Pentagon; the passenger heroism on Flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, before its hijackers could plow the plane into the U.S. Capitol; or the grounding of passenger planes throughout the United States, even as President George W. Bush, en route to Washington from Florida, remained airborne on Air Force One during the uncertain hours after the attack.

But we cannot let these harrowing memories, and the manipulation of new fears, goad us into furthering the terrorists' cause of bringing this nation down. Unity and resolve must triumph over the scare tactics and lies that our adversaries — foreign and domestic — weaponize to divide us.

Shortly after Sept. 11, a classic American battle came to the fore, as our better angels grappled with our inner demons.

"In fighting against bad things, we can't forget what we're fighting for," said Mary Bauer, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia.

For Jason Mollica, a professor in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, the impact of the attack hit close: He lost two cousins at the World Trade Center. A family friend — a Port Authority officer — rushed into a twin tower to help people and never came out.

"Obviously, it brought people together," he said of the attack, which took place months after the contentious outcome of the presidential contest between Bush and Al Gore. "Unfortunately, I think we're more divided than we were, even prior to 9/11.

"I'm not sure if we'll ever get back to that point of feeling that pride in coming together — of making sure that as a nation we are one."

A common refrain about the people who'd terrorized our nation from without was, *They hate our freedom*. And then we proceeded to chisel away at those freedoms from within.

We embraced policies — such as the mass surveillance of U.S. citizens under the Patriot Act and the torture of mostly Muslim and Arab detainees at Guantanamo Bay — that are anathema to what our nation professes to stand for.

"We have a history as a nation of reacting to tragedy and bad things that happen by cracking down on civil liberties in really terrible ways," Bauer said. She cited the Palmer Raids to capture and deport suspected leftists, anarchists and communists after World War I; the incarceration of people of Japanese descent, including U.S. citizens, in internment camps during World War II; and government spying on U.S. citizens during the Red Scare of the 1950s. "And I see 9/11 in that same way," she said, citing a "huge surge" in discrimination against American Muslims.

In the aftermath of the attack, we launched wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Iraqi invasion, in search of illusory weapons of mass destruction, destabilized the region, bolstered Iran and gave rise to the Islamic State. And Afghanistan, with the withdrawal of U.S. military support, has again fallen under the control of the Taliban, leaving our Afghan allies and that nation's women mired in uncertainty.

The failure of those protracted wars is a defining aspect of the post-9/11 era, said Angus Kress Gillespie, a professor in the American Studies Department at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"We got used to the idea of a forever war," Gillespie said. "And as it turns out, I believe both were not winnable. The real victor in Iraq was Iran. And apparently, the real victor in Afghanistan is the Taliban. And so the takeaway I see is we cannot be the policeman of the world; that we have to give up on imperialism and militarism."

Meanwhile, our lives changed in ways big and small.

Mollica cites the acceleration of a cultural shift: the dominance of the 24-hour news cycle on television. News cameras remained trained on ground zero. Mollica, who lived in South Jersey at the time, left his TV on all night after the attack.

Our nation created a huge new bureaucracy, the Department of Homeland Security, and its offshoot, the Transportation Security Administration. Air travel would never be the same, with longer lines and more inconvenience. The heightened vigilance at airport checkpoints — down to the 3.4-ounce limit on liquid containers we are allowed to carry — is a constant reminder of the day those planes were hijacked and crashed.

Gillespie supports TSA efforts to keep weapons off airplanes as "common-sense reform." But he laments the more negative impulses stemming from 9/11.

"I think there is this hostility toward all Arab Muslims, and that's not a good thing," he said. "Another bad thing is there's this crackdown on immigration, with the suspicion that anybody who's coming to the United States is a potential terrorist."

Indeed, other than the victims, survivors and first responders of 9/11, no one has borne the brunt of 9/11 more heavily than American Muslims.

"We went through some challenging times," said Imad Damaj, outreach chair for the Islamic Center of Virginia. But he has also experienced support and interfaith relationship building. "So while I acknowledge it was a challenging 20 years — and still is to a certain extent — I'm also very hopeful that we as a nation are going to think of ourselves as one community, connected to each other."

Damaj, a native of Lebanon, sees this day as a time for the survivors to remember loved ones; for community and national remembrance; and to recapture the unity we felt after the attack. "We need to bring back that spirit, together."

That's no easy task in a nation that can't find the capacity to unite against a deadly virus.

The once all-encompassing threat of Islamist terror is now overshadowed by the homegrown terror of white supremacists. Democracy is reeling from a toxic brew of rage, paranoia and pandemic-induced isolation. On the same steps where members of Congress consoled a nation in shock, a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol, intent on overturning the results of a presidential election.

During times of adversity, we discover who we are. This is that moment.

Ultimately, I believe optimism will triumph over cynicism, and that our nation's eloquent blueprint will someday be realized. Striving to make America's grandest aspirations real is the highest expression of patriotism.

We can't make America great if we lack a consensus on what it means to be an American. We must rally against the enemy within that has turned us against each other.

What better time for us to start than now?

On this solemn day, we honor the victims by teaching our children how we were attacked, how we answered, and the lessons we should draw from our response. We recapture the compassion and valor in that response, but cast the hate and bigotry aside. We create a fairer, more equitable America — a nation whose ideals are worth protecting and perfecting.

We are only as great as the least of us. And we stand tallest when we stand together.



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DAN LOH, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Statue of Liberty stands at dawn in front of a smoldering lower Manhattan on Sept. 15, 2001, four days after planes controlled by terrorists crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center.

Unthinkable tragedy

On Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four passenger airplanes – determined to crash them into symbols of U.S. democracy and prosperity. They largely succeeded in shattering America's sense of security at home, plowing into the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Passengers on the fourth plane overpowered the terrorists, driving it into the ground in Pennsylvania rather than hitting another presumed target in Washington. In all, nearly 3,000 people died.



CHAO SOI CHEONG, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Smoke and flames billow from the World Trade Center towers Sept. 11, 2001.



KEITH SRAKOCIC, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Workers survey the crater created when United Airlines Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pa., on Sept. 11, 2001.



BETH A. KEISER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rescue workers climb on piles of rubble at the World Trade Center in New York on Sept. 13, 2001.



HEESOON YIM, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A helicopter flies over the Pentagon in Washington on Sept. 11, 2001, after a plane crashed into the building in a terrorist attack.



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Left: Firefighters work near the destroyed mullions – the vertical struts that once faced the soaring outer walls of the World Trade Center's twin towers – after a terrorist attack in New York on Sept. 11, 2001.

Key events

7:59 a.m. American Flight 11 departs Boston for Los Angeles; hijacked, diverted to New York City.

8:14 a.m. United Flight 175 departs Boston for Los Angeles; hijacked, diverted to New York City.

8:20 a.m. American Flight 77 departs Washington's Dulles Airport for Los Angeles; hijacked, diverted to Pentagon.

8:42 a.m. United Flight 93 departs Newark, New Jersey, for San Francisco; hijacked, diverted south.

8:46 a.m. American Flight 11 crashes into the World Trade Center's north tower.

8:55 a.m. President George W. Bush informed in Sarasota, Florida.

9:03 a.m. United Flight 175 crashes into the World Trade Center's south tower.

9:37 a.m. American Flight 77 crashes into the Pentagon.

9:42 a.m. The Federal Aviation Administration stops all takeoffs, landings at U.S. airports; some international flights diverted to Canada.

9:45 a.m. White House evacuated.

9:57 a.m. Passenger on United Flight 93 uses cellphone to report hijacking.

9:59 a.m. World Trade Center south tower collapses.

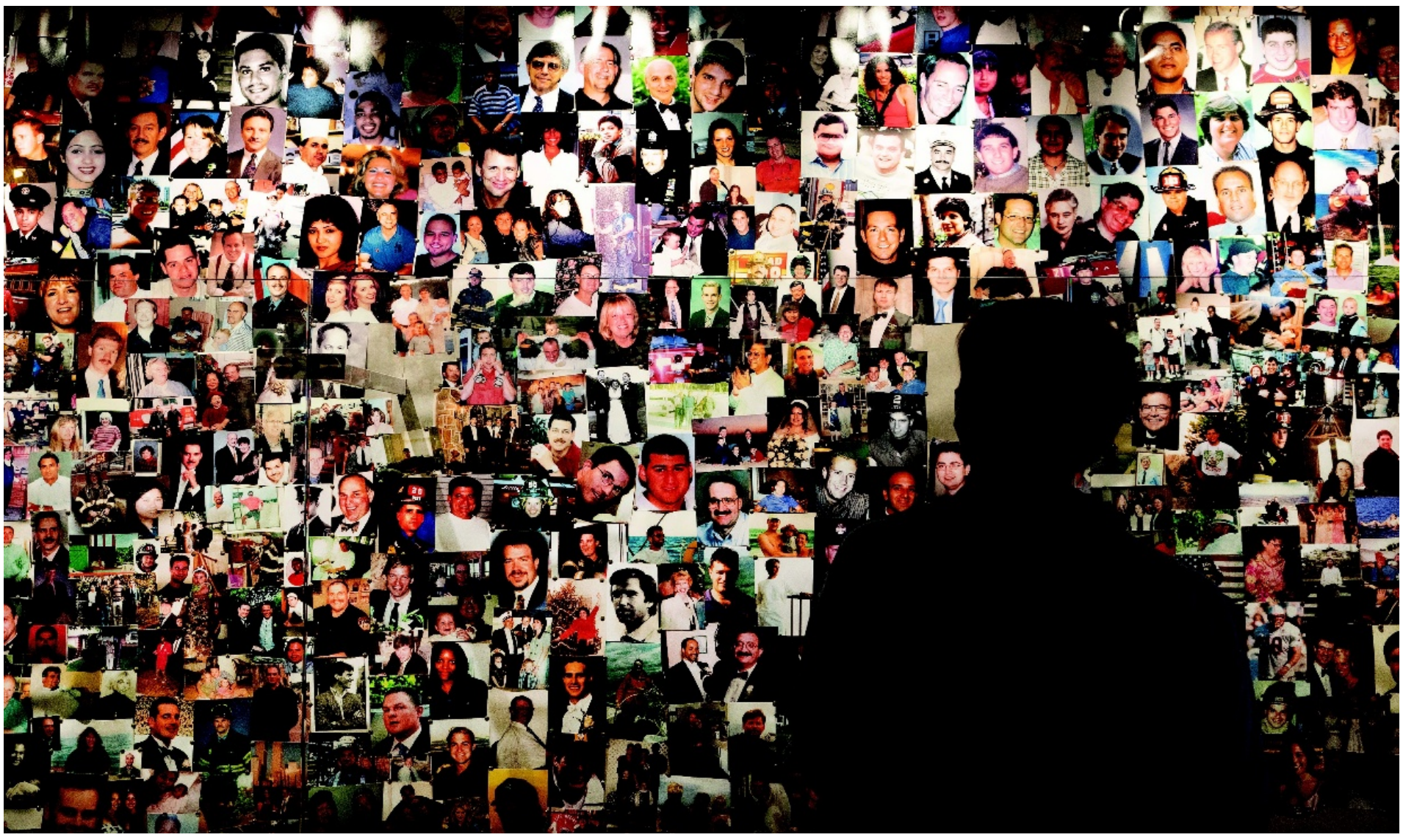
10:03 a.m. United Flight 93 crashes in Pennsylvania.

10:10 a.m. Section of Pentagon collapses.

10:28 a.m. World Trade Center north tower collapses.

Source: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

NOTE: All times EDT



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Désirée Bouchat, a survivor of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, looks at photos of those who perished in a display at the 9/11 Tribute Museum on Aug. 6 in New York. While Sept. 11, 2001, was a day of carnage, it also was a story of survival: Nearly 3,000 people were killed, but an estimated 33,000 or more people evacuated the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Survival was the 'first piece of the journey'

9/11 forever changed those who made it out

JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Trapped deep in the wreckage of the World Trade Center, Will Jimeno lived through the unthinkable. Twenty years later, he's still living with it.

A brace and a quarter-sized divot on his left leg reflect the injuries that ended his police career, a lifetime dream. He has post-traumatic stress disorder. He keeps shelves of mementoes, including a cross and miniature twin towers fashioned from trade center steel. He was portrayed in a movie and wrote two books about enduring the ordeal.

"It never goes away, for those of us that were there that day," he says.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed when hijackers in Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network rammed four commercial jets into the trade center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001. Yet an estimated 33,000 or more people successfully evacuated the targeted buildings.

They navigated mountains of smoky stairs in the World Trade Center's twin towers or streamed out of a flaming Pentagon. Some fled an otherworldly dust cloud at ground zero. Others willed their way out of pitch-dark rubble.

Sept. 11 survivors bear scars and the weight of unanswerable questions. Some grapple with their place in a tragedy defined by an enormous loss of life. They get told to "get over" 9/11. But they also say they have gained resilience, purpose, appreciation and resolve.

"One of the things that I learned," Jimeno says, "is to never give up."



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Désirée Bouchat stands near the rebuilt World Trade Center complex in New York on Aug. 6. On Sept. 11, 2001, people initially thought the plane crash into the north tower was accidental, so there was no immediate evacuation order for the south tower, where Bouchat worked. But a colleague ushered her and others to the elevators and then turned back to check on more people. James Patrick Berger never made it out.

'It's almost like you're reborn'

It wasn't Bruce Stephan's first incredibly close call.

In 1989, his car got perilously wedged on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit and the upper deck collapsed while he was driving across.

Twelve years later, the engineer and lawyer was settling into his workday on the 65th floor of the trade center's north tower when one of the planes crashed about 30 stories above.

Only after his roughly hourlong walk down the crowded stairs did Stephan learn that another plane had hit the south tower — the building where his wife, Joan, also an attorney, worked on the 91st floor. Above the impact zone.

Unable to reach her by cellphone, Stephan dashed to a payphone and called her relatives, who told him she'd gotten out.

Then the south tower fell, and Stephan's fear spiked anew. Had Joan been caught in the collapse? Hours later, he learned that she was OK.

"My experience from the first disaster was that it's a strangely happy moment when you know that you've survived," Stephan says. "It's almost like you're reborn … to know that you're alive and that you still have a shot at life, and here's your chance to do something."

"When it happened a second time, it's just like, 'Oh, my God.'"

After the earthquake, the New York City natives resolved to change their workaholic lives. After 9/11, they did.

Within two months, the couple moved to Essex, a northern New York town of roughly 700 people. While telecommuting and sometimes actually commuting, they made time for other things — church, a book club, amateur theater, gardening, zoning meetings, a local newsletter. They cherished a newfound sense of community.

But a work opportunity pulled them back to San Francisco in 2009. They loved it, until the pandemic made them rethink their lives again.

"One of the things that that we discovered as a result of the disasters was that being in a community … is maybe the biggest reward you can have," Stephan, 65, says from their front porch in Essex. They moved back last year.

'I was a walking zombie'

Désirée Bouchat pauses by one of the inscribed names on the 9/11 memorial: James Patrick Berger. She last saw him on the 101st floor of the trade center's south tower.

"Some days, it feels like it happened yesterday," she says.

At first, people figured the plane crash at the north tower was accidental. There was no immediate evacuation order for the south tower. But Berger ushered Bouchat and other Aon Corp. colleagues to the elevators, then turned back to check for more people.

Just as Bouchat exited the south tower, another plane slammed into it. Nearly 180 Aon workers died, including Berger.

For a while, Bouchat told everyone, including herself: "I'm fine. I'm alive."

But "I was a walking zombie," she says now.

She couldn't multitask anymore. Remarks that used to bother her stirred no reaction. She was functioning, but through a fog that took more than a year to lift.

Bouchat eventually felt that she needed to talk about 9/11. The Springfield, New Jersey, resident has now led about 500 tours for the 9/11 Tribute Museum (it's separate from the larger National September 11 Memorial & Museum).

Bruce Powers has traveled from Alexandria, Virginia, to lead Tribute Museum tours, too. And every Sept. 11, the 82-year-old repeats his seven-mile walk home from the Pentagon after the attack that killed 184 people, 10 of whom he knew.



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Désirée Bouchat reaches toward the inscribed name of James Patrick Berger at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York. She last saw her co-worker on the 101st floor of the trade center's south tower. Nearly 180 Aon Corp. workers perished, including Berger.

The walk, the tours and hearing other guides' personal stories "serve well in helping me deal with what happened," says Powers, a now-retired Navy aviation planner.

The public hasn't fully recognized the losses survivors felt, says Mary Fetchet, a social worker who lost her son Brad on 9/11 and founded Voices Center for Resilience, a support and advocacy group for victims' families, first responders and survivors. "Although they are still living, they're living in a very different way."

'It's not something to be gotten over'

A tsunami of dust washed over emergency medical technician Guy Sanders, so thick that it clogged his surgical mask.

The 47-story building at 7 World Trade Center had just collapsed, about seven hours after the burning towers fell and debris ignited fires in the smaller high-rise.

A part-time EMS supervisor for a private ambulance company in the city, Sanders had scrambled to respond from his day job at a Long Island collections agency. He was en route when the towers collapsed, killing eight EMA workers, including his colleague Yamel Merino. Sanders went to funeral after funeral for EMTs, firefighters and police.

Yet 9/11 only deepened his commitment to EMS. Though it was tricky financially, he soon went full time.

"I never wanted to be in a situation where people needed me and I couldn't immediately respond," he says.

He still doesn't. But health problems — including a rare cancer that the federal government has linked to trade center dust exposure — forced his 2011 retirement, says Sanders, 62, now living near Orangeburg, South Carolina.

"You get people telling you, 'Well, (9/11) happened so long ago. Get over it.' But it is a trauma," says Sanders, who joined a first responders' and survivors' support group. "It's not something to be gotten over. It's something to be addressed."

'While I'm here, I've got to make it count'

Breathing through an oxygen mask in a hospital bed, Wendy Lanski told herself: "If Osama bin Laden didn't kill me, I'm not dying of COVID."

Nearly two decades earlier, the health insurance manager escaped the north tower's 29th floor and ran, barefoot, through the dust cloud from the south tower's collapse. Eleven of her Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield colleagues died.

"The only good thing about surviving a tragedy or a catastrophe of any kind is: It definitely makes you more resilient," says Lanski, who was hospitalized with the coronavirus — as was her husband — for two touch-and-go weeks in spring 2020.

But "surviving is only the first piece of the journey," says Lanski, 51, of West Orange, New Jersey.

She has the twin towers, "9/11/01" and "survivor" tattooed on her ankle. But the attacks also left other marks, ones she didn't choose.

Images and sounds of falling people and panes of glass are lodged in her memory. She was diagnosed in 2006 with sarcoidosis, she said; the federal government has concluded the inflammatory disease may be linked to trade center dust. And she has asked herself: "Why am I here and 3,000 people are not?"

Over time, she accepted not knowing.

"But while I'm here, I've got to make it count," says Lanski, who has spoken at schools and traveled to conferences about terror victims. "I've got to make up for 3,000 people who lost their voice."

It 'motivates me to live a better life'

Buried in darkness and 20 feet or more of rubble from both towers, Will Jimeno was ready to die.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department rookie was in searing pain from a fallen wall pinning his left side. Fellow officer Dominick Pezzulo had died next to him. Flaming debris had fallen on Jimeno's arm and heated the cramped area enough that Pezzulo's gun fired, sending a flurry of bullets past Jimeno's head. He had yelled for help for hours. He was terribly thirsty.

"If I die today," he remembers thinking, "at least I died trying to help people."

Then Jimeno, who is Catholic, had what he describes as a vision of a robed man walking toward him, a bottle of water in his hand.

We're going to get out, he told Sgt. John McLoughlin, who was trapped with him.

It was hours — of pushing back pain, thinking of rescues in past disasters, talking to keep alert — before they were found and gruelingly extricated by former U.S. Marines, NYPD officers, a one-time paramedic and firefighters as blazes flared and debris shifted and fell.

"If you wanted to picture what hell looked like, this was probably it," recalls then-NYPD Officer Ken Winkler.

Jimeno was freed around 11 p.m., McLoughlin the next morning. Jimeno underwent surgeries and lengthy rehabilitation.

But he says his psychological recovery was harder. Trivial things made him lose his temper — fueled, he now realizes, by anger about the deaths of colleagues and people rescuers couldn't help. At times, he says, he thought of suicide. It took three years and multiple therapists before he mastered warding off the outbursts.

It has helped to tell his story in talks, in the 2006 Oliver Stone movie "World Trade Center," and in Jimeno's two newly released books — the illustrated "Immigrant, American, Survivor" for children, and "Sunrise Through the Darkness," about coping with trauma.

The Colombian-born U.S. Navy veteran hopes that people see in his story "the resiliency of the human soul, the American spirit," and the power of good people stepping up in bad times.

Sept. 11 "motivates me to live a better life," says Jimeno, 53, of Chester, New Jersey. "The way I can honor those we lost and those that were injured is to live a fruitful life. To be an example to others that Sept. 11 did not destroy us."



Retired New York Police Officer Mark DeMarco still wears a wristband with the names of the 14 members of his unit killed on Sept. 11, 2001.



WONG MAYE-E PHOTOS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Retired New York Police Officer Mark DeMarco is seen Aug. 3 in a reflection off of a display cabinet where he keeps memorabilia from 9/11 at his home in Staten Island, New York. He still has the small flashlight he used to navigate out of the rubble of the fallen skyscrapers. DeMarco said he worries that public memory of the attacks is fading.

'I couldn't figure out how I got out of there alive'

For a time after 9/11, New York Police Officer Mark DeMarco replayed the what-ifs in his mind. If he'd gone right instead of left. A bit earlier. Or later.

"I couldn't figure out how I got out of there alive," he says.

After helping evacuate the north tower, the Emergency Service Unit officer was surrounded by a maze of debris when parts of the skyscraper tumbled onto a smaller building where he'd been directed. Some officers with him were killed.

Barely able to see his own boots with a small flashlight, DeMarco inched through the ruins with two officers behind him.

Then he took a step and felt nothing underfoot. He looked below and saw utter darkness.

Only later — after the officers turned around and eventually clambered through shattered windows to safety — did DeMarco realize he'd nearly tumbled into a crater carved by the collapse.

Now 68 and retired, DeMarco still wears a wristband with the names of the 14 ESU members killed that day. He worries that the public memory of the attacks is fading, that the passage of time has created a false sense of security.

"Have fun with life. Don't be afraid," he says. "But be mindful."



RICHARD DREW, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Will Jimeno, a former Port Authority police officer who was rescued from the rubble of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks at the World Trade Center, reads from "Immigrant, American, Survivor," a children's book he wrote that draws on his experience, during an interview in his home in Chester, N.J., on Aug. 2. Injured in the attack, Jimeno wears a compression sock and leg brace band on his left leg.



WONG MAYE-E, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Retired New York Police Officer Ken Winkler helped coordinate the department's Emergency Service Unit response at the World Trade Center site on Sept. 11, 2001, ducking behind a truck to escape debris when the south tower collapsed. "It went from a clear day to various shades of gray and black ... from kind of organized chaos to just chaos," recalls Winkler, who now manages Manhattan's cruise ship terminal.



WONG MAYE-E, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ken Winkler holds a broken piece of glass from the fallen World Trade Center skyscrapers that he keeps in his office. "Somebody once asked me, 'How often do you think about it?' I told him it's easier to count the days when you don't think about it," says Winkler.

American Muslims fighting for identity

9/11 thrusts diverse communities into spotlight

MARIAM FAM, DEEPTI HAJELA AND LUIS ANDRES HENAO
Associated Press

A car passed, the driver's window rolled down and the man spat an epithet at two little girls wearing their hijabs: "Terrorist!"

It was 2001, mere weeks after the World Trade Center fell, and 10-year-old Shahana Hanif and her younger sister were walking to the local mosque from their Brooklyn, New York, home.

As the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks is marked, Hanif still recalls her confusion over how anyone could look at her, a child, and see a threat.

"It's not a nice, kind word. It means violence, it means dangerous. It is meant to shock whoever … is on the receiving end of it," she says.

But the incident also spurred a determination to speak out for herself and others. She's become a community organizer and is strongly favored to win a seat on the New York City Council in an upcoming election.

Like Hanif, other young American Muslims have grown up under the shadow of 9/11. Many have faced hostility, suspicion, questions about their faith, doubts over their Americanness. They've also found ways to fight back against bias, to organize and to craft nuanced personal narratives about their identities. In the process, they've challenged stereotypes.

After 9/11, America's diverse Muslim communities were foisted into the spotlight, says Youssef Chouhoud, a political scientist at Virginia's Christopher Newport University.

"Your sense of who you were was becoming more formed, not just Muslim but American Muslim," he says. "What distinguished you as an American Muslim? Could you be fully both, or did you have to choose? There was a lot of grappling with what that meant."

In Hanif's case, there was no blueprint.

"Fifth-grader me wasn't naïve or too young to know Muslims are in danger," she wrote in an essay about 9/11's aftermath. "Flashing an American flag from our first-floor windows didn't make me more American."

A young Hanif gathered neighborhood friends to write a letter to then-President George W. Bush asking for protection. "We knew," she says, "that we would become like warriors of this community."



EMILY LESHNER, ASSOCIATED PRESS
Shahana Hanif, a community organizer favored to win a seat on the New York City Council in an upcoming municipal election, stands in front of her home in the Kensington neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, on Aug. 18. In 2001, just weeks after the twin towers at the World Trade Center fell, a car passed then-10-year-old Shahana and her younger sister while they were wearing their hijabs: "Terrorist!" the man shouted at them. Unsure and afraid, the girls ran.

Ishaq Pathan

Ishaq Pathan, 26, recalls when a boy told him he seemed angry and wondered if Pathan was going to blow up their Connecticut school.

He remembers feeling helpless when taken aside at a U.S. airport for additional questioning after spending a college semester in Morocco.

The agent looked through his belongings, including the laptop where he kept a private journal, and started reading it.

"I remember having tears in my eyes. I was completely and utterly powerless," says Pathan.

"You go to school with other people of different backgrounds and you realize … what the promise of the United States is," he adds. "And when you see it not living up to that promise, then I think it instills in us a sense of wanting to help and fix that."

He now works as the San Francisco Bay Area director for the nonprofit Islamic Networks Group, trying to help younger generations grow confident in their Muslim identity.



JESSIE WARDARSKI, ASSOCIATED PRESS
Mansoor Shams, center, and other community members attend Friday prayer Aug. 13 in Rosedale, Md. **Below:** Shams looks through photos from his time in the Marines at his home in Baltimore.



Mansoor Shams

After 9/11, some American Muslims chose to dispel misconceptions about their faith through personal connections.

Mansoor Shams has traveled across the U.S. with a sign reading: "I'm Muslim and a U.S. Marine, ask anything." It's part of the 39-year-old veteran's efforts to counter hate through dialogue.

In 2019, he spoke to students at Liberty University in Virginia; some still call him with questions about Islam.

"There's this mutual love and respect," he says.



KAREN DUCEY, ASSOCIATED PRESS
Shukri Olow, a Muslim woman who is running for King County Council District 5, poses for a portrait Aug. 13 in Kent, Wash., south of Seattle.

Shukri Olow

Born in Somalia, Shukri Olow fled civil war with her family and lived in Kenyan refugee camps before eventually finding home in a public housing complex in Kent, south of Seattle.

After 9/11, she recalls feeling confused when a teacher in America asked, "What are your people doing?"

Today, she's seeking a seat on the King County Council.

"There are many young people who have multiple identities who have felt that they don't belong here, that they are not welcomed here," she says. "I was one of those young people. And so I try to do what I can to make sure that more of us know that this is our nation, too."



JESSIE WARDARSKI, ASSOCIATED PRESS
Amirah Ahmed prays at her local mosque in Fredericksburg, Va., on Aug. 15.

Ahmed Ali Akbar

Shortly after 9/11, some adults in Ahmed Ali Akbar's community arranged for an assembly at his school in Saginaw, Michigan, where he and other students talked about Islam and Muslims. But he recalls his confusion at some of the questions: Where is Osama bin Laden? What's the reason behind the attacks?

That period left him feeling like trying to change people's minds wasn't always effective.

Akbar, now 33, eventually turned his focus toward telling stories about Muslim Americans on his podcast, "See Something Say Something."

"There's a lot of humor in the Muslim American experience as well," he says. "It's not all just sadness and reaction to the violence and … racism and Islamophobia."

Amirah Ahmed

Amirah Ahmed, 17, was born after the attacks and feels she was thrust into a struggle not of her making.

A few years ago at her Virginia school's 9/11 commemoration, she felt students' stares at her and her hijab.

For the next anniversary, she wore her Americanness as a shield, donning an American flag headscarf to address her classmates from a podium.

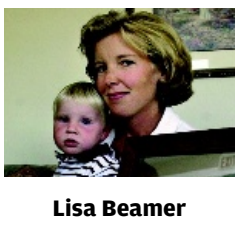
Ahmed spoke about honoring both the lives of those who died in America on 9/11 and of Iraqis who died in the war launched in 2003. She says it was a "really powerful moment."

But she hopes her future children don't feel the need to prove they belong. "They should not have to continue fighting for their identity."

9/11's biggest names

BY JERRY SCHWARTZ • Associated Press

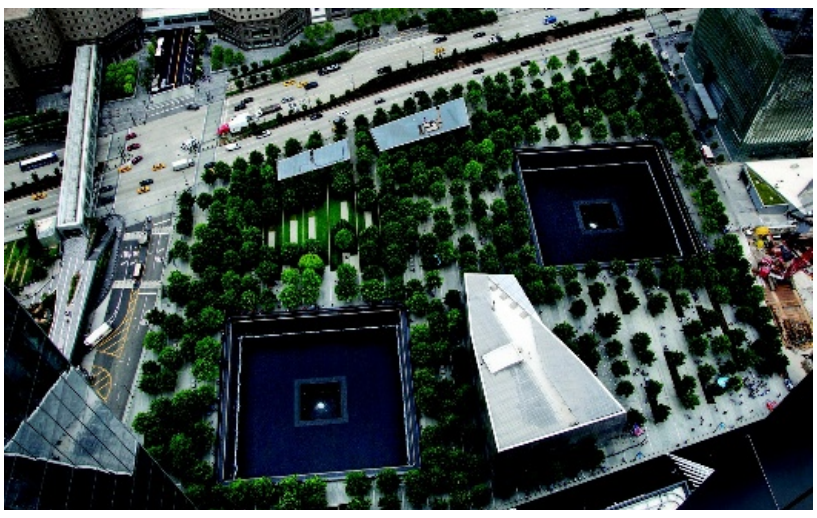
Rudolph Giuliani was a hero before he was a punchline. Lisa Beamer was a wife and mother before she became a symbol of Sept. 11 — and though her celebrity passed, her widowhood cannot. In the aftermath of the planes falling from the sky, America and the world were introduced to an array of personalities. Some we had known well, but came to see in different ways. Others were thrown into public consciousness by unhappy happenstance. Some, like former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who supported the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, are dead. So is al-Qaida founder and 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, who was killed by Navy SEALs in a raid on his compound in 2011. Others have gone on to lead lives that are postscripts to Sept. 11, 2001. Here are a few of the boldface names of that tumultuous time — what they were then, and what has happened to them since.

THEN	NAME	SINCE
Attorney general during President George W. Bush's first term. In the wake of 9/11, he was the administration's prime advocate of the USA PATRIOT Act, which gave the government broad powers to investigate and prosecute those suspected of terrorism. But in 2004, while lying in an intensive care unit with gallstone pancreatitis, he refused the administration's entreaties to overrule a Justice Department finding that the Bush domestic intelligence program was illegal.	 **John Ashcroft**	After leaving office in 2005, Ashcroft became a lobbyist and consultant. His appearances as a gospel singer (and songwriter — his tune "Let the Eagle Soar" was performed at the second Bush inauguration) have tailed off.
After 9/11, Lisa Beamer became the face of the day's mourners, and a reminder of the day's heroism. Her husband, Todd, a former college baseball and basketball player, is believed to have led other passengers in an attack on the hijackers of United Airlines Flight 93 that brought the plane down before it could crash in Washington. His exhortation of "Let's roll!" became a rallying cry. His widow made 200 public appearances in the six months after the attacks.	 **Lisa Beamer**	Beamer co-wrote a book, "Let's Roll! Ordinary People, Extraordinary Courage," and established a foundation in her husband's memory. Donations dwindled, and Beamer receded from public view. The couple had three children, and all attended Wheaton College, where their parents met. All are athletes, like their dad: Dave, 3 years old when his father died, was a football quarterback; Drew, who was 1, played soccer, as did Morgan, born four months after the attacks. Morgan was her father's middle name.
The 43rd president of the United States, Bush was informed of the 9/11 attacks while reading to second-graders in Sarasota, Florida. He spoke to the nation that night and visited ground zero three days later, grabbing a bullhorn to declare: "I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you! And the people — and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon." His support in the polls reached 85 percent.	 **George W. Bush**	The War on Terrorism began the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Bush's demand that the Taliban "hand over the terrorists, or … share in their fate." He had long retired to oil painting in Texas when Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden, and when President Joe Biden pulled U.S. forces from Afghanistan. In August, he said he was watching developments there "with deep sadness."
While the Secret Service played "hide the president" with President George W. Bush on Sept. 11 — he was shuttled to military bases in Louisiana and Nebraska, for fear of terrorist attacks — his vice president hunkered down in a "secure, undisclosed location," a bunker inside the White House where he helped direct the government's actions. Cheney became a fierce advocate of an unbridled response to the attacks, using "any means at our disposal." He pushed for the 2003 war in Iraq. The interrogation technique known as waterboarding was a proper way to get information from terrorists, he said — not torture, as its critics have long insisted.	 **Richard Cheney**	After five heart attacks and a 2012 heart transplant, Cheney has lived to see his daughter, Liz, win his old congressional seat in Wyoming and become GOP persona non grata because of her criticism of former President Donald Trump.
Mayor of New York City, Giuliani was a hero of the moment — empathetic, determined, a focus of the nation's grief and a constant presence at ground zero. "The number of casualties will be more than any of us can bear ultimately," he said on Sept. 11. Oprah Winfrey pronounced him "America's Mayor"; Time magazine declared him "Person of the Year."	 **Rudolph Giuliani**	After suggesting that his expiring term be extended due to the 9/11 emergency — an idea that was roundly dismissed — Giuliani went into private life, but not all that private. He launched a profitable security firm and ran abortively for the Republican nomination for president in 2008. His adventures as a supporter of and agent for former President Donald Trump are well documented and resulted in the suspension of his law license in his home state.
Interim leader and then elected president of Afghanistan in the wake of Sept. 11, Karzai managed the delicate balancing act of remaining on friendly terms with the United States and the West while unifying his country's many factions — at least for a time. More than once, he called the Taliban "brothers," and the later years of his presidency were marked by friction with the United States.	 **Hamid Karzai**	Karzai has survived numerous assassination attempts, but when his second term expired in 2014, the passage of power to his successor, Ashraf Ghani, was peaceful. Ghani would lead the country for almost seven years, until he fled in the face of the Taliban's triumphant return.
New York City's police commissioner. Bald and stocky, he never left Giuliani's side in the days after Sept. 11 — and followed the mayor after he left office, joining Giuliani's security firm.	 **Bernard Kerik**	President George W. Bush appointed Kerik as Iraq's interim minister of the interior in 2003 during the Iraq war, and nominated him to head the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2004. He withdrew from consideration when it was revealed that he had employed an undocumented worker as a nanny and housekeeper; there followed a series of legal troubles, including convictions for ethics violations and tax fraud. He was pardoned by President Donald Trump in 2020.
The chairman of the stock trading company Cantor Fitzgerald would have been in the company's offices at the top of One World Trade Center, but he took his son Kyle to the first day of kindergarten. A total of 658 of the company's employees — two-thirds of its New York City workforce, including Lutnick's brother Gary — perished. Within three days, Lutnick had established the Cantor-Fitzgerald Relief Fund for his company's victims.	 **Howard Lutnick**	The fund has disbursed more than a quarter of a billion dollars, including money for other victims of terrorism and disasters. Twenty years later, Lutnick remains the company's chairman.
Leading propagandist of al-Qaida, labeled the "principal architect of the 9/11 attacks" by the 9/11 Commission. He was captured in 2003 by the CIA and Pakistan's secret police, then spirited to CIA prisons in Poland and Afghanistan and finally to Guantanamo. Under duress — some called it torture — he confessed to involvement in nearly every major al-Qaida operation, including the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, the killing of journalist Daniel Pearl, the 2001 attacks and others.	 **Khalid Sheikh Mohammed**	His trial date has been postponed again and again. He remains at Guantanamo, indefinitely.
A former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Powell was confirmed unanimously as secretary of state in 2001. He would go on to make a persuasive case before the United Nations for military action against Iraq, claiming that Saddam Hussein was building weapons of mass destruction. The war was waged, Saddam was toppled and killed, Iraq was destabilized; no such weapons were found.	 **Colin Powell**	Powell has consistently defended his support of the Iraq War. But the lifelong Republican had little use for former President Donald Trump, endorsing Hillary Clinton in 2016 and speaking in support of then-presidential candidate Joe Biden at the 2020 Democratic convention. He left the Republican Party after the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol.
National security adviser to former President George W. Bush. In the summer of 2001, Rice met with CIA Director George Tenet at his request to discuss the threat of al-Qaida attacks on American targets. The CIA reported that "There will be significant terrorist attacks against the United States in the coming weeks or months." Rice would later say that the information was old.	 **Condoleezza Rice**	Rice succeeded Colin Powell as secretary of state and has since returned to Stanford University as provost, then as a faculty member. In 2012, she also became one of the first two women allowed to join Augusta National Golf Club.
As deputy assistant attorney general in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, Yoo provided much of the legal underpinning for the War on Terrorism. He argued that "enemy combatants" captured in Afghanistan need not be given prisoner of war status; that the president could authorize warrantless wiretaps of U.S. citizens on American soil; and that the use of "enhanced interrogation techniques" like waterboarding was within the power of the president during wartime.	 **John Yoo**	Yoo is a professor at the University of California, Berkley, School of Law. He remains a strong supporter of presidential prerogatives; in 2020, his book "Defender in Chief: Donald Trump's Fight for Presidential Power" argued that Trump's vision of the presidency was in line with that of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton.



KEITH SRAKOCIC, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The sun shines through the "Tower of Voices" at the Flight 93 National Memorial on May 8 in Shanksville, Pa. The tower contains 40 wind chimes to honor the 40 people who died Sept. 11, 2001, when their plane crashed into a field.



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The World Trade Center site is seen from above in June 2018. The annual 9/11 commemorations are by now familiar rituals, centered on reading the names of the dead.

Honoring those lost

Since the day terrorists attacked the United States from the skies, Americans have vowed to 'never forget.' Not the twin towers in New York. Not the Pentagon in Washington. And not a somber field in Pennsylvania. The need to remember it all – in ways large and small – may take on even greater urgency as we mark 20 years since that tragic day.



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

One World Trade Center towers above a grove of trees at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York on Jan. 15, 2019.



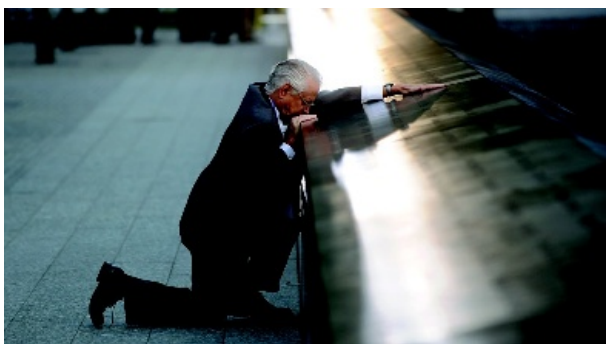
PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Flowers are left on a bench on the grounds of the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial before the start of the annual memorial observance in 2018.



GENE J. PUSKAR, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Visitors to the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pa., participate in a sunset memorial service in 2018.



JUSTIN LANE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Robert Peraza, who lost his son, Robert David Peraza, in the attacks at the World Trade Center, pauses at his son's name at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York in 2011.



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Tribute in Light rises above buildings in lower Manhattan during a test in 2013 in New York.



KEITH SRAKOCIC, ASSOCIATED PRESS

John Pristas, a firefighter for the Cranberry Township Volunteer Fire Company, plays "Taps" on Sept. 11, 2017, at his local 9/11 memorial in Cranberry, Pa.



MARY ALTAFFER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sophie, Countess of Wessex, pauses at Spencer Finch's "Trying To Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning" during a visit Nov. 11, 2015, to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York.

IN TRIBUTE

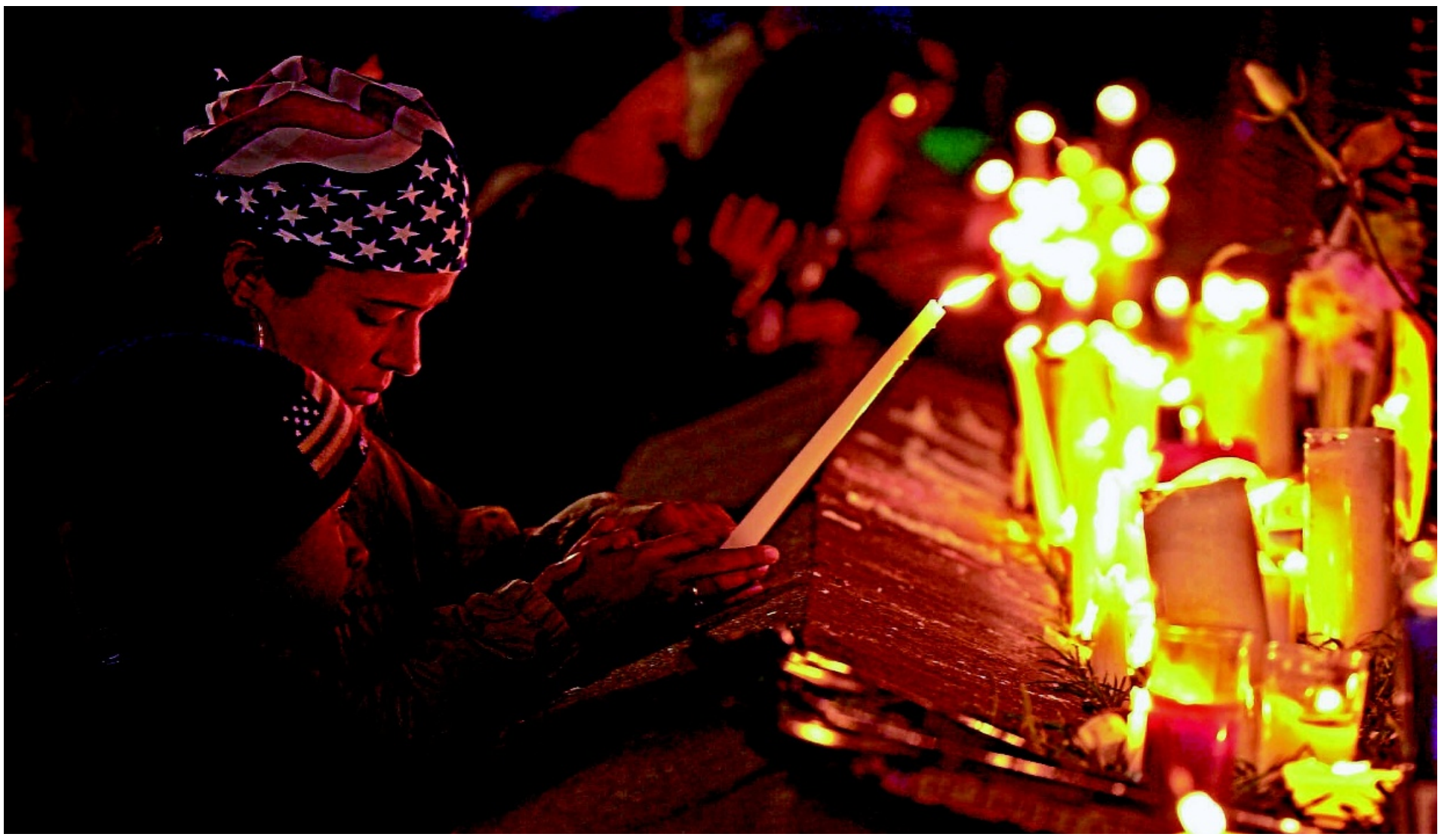
The victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks

WORLD TRADE CENTER VICTIMS Gordon M. Aamoth, Jr., Edelmiro Abad, Maria Rose Abad, Andrew Anthony Abate, Vincent Abate, Laurence Christopher Abel, William F. Abrahamson, Richard Anthony Aceto, Jesus Acevedo Rescand, Heinrich Bernhard Ackermann, Paul Acquaviva, Donald LaRoy Adams, Patrick Adams, Shannon Lewis Adams, Stephen George Adams, Ignatius Udo Adanga, Christy A. Addamo, Terence E. Adderley, Jr., Sophia Buruwad Addo, Lee Allan Adler, Daniel Thomas Afflitto, Emmanuel Akwasi Afuakwah, Alok Agarwal, Mukul Kumar Agarwala, Joseph Agnello, David Scott Agnes, Brian G. Ahearn, Jeremiah Joseph Ahern, Joanne Marie Ahladiotis, Shabbir Ahmed, Terrance Andre Aiken, Godwin Ajala, Gertrude M. Alagero, Andrew Alameno, Margaret Ann Alario, Gary M. Albero, Jon Leslie Albert, Peter Alderman, Jacquelyn Delaine Aldridge, David D. Alger, Sarah Ali-Escarcega, Ernest Alikakos, Edward L. Allegretto, Eric Allen, Joseph Ryan Allen, Richard Dennis Allen, Richard Lanard Allen, Christopher E. Allingham, Janet M. Alonso, Arturo Alva-Moreno, Anthony Alvarado, Antonio Javier Alvarez, Victoria Alvarez-Brito, Telmo E. Alvear, Cesar Amoranto Alviar, Tariq Amanullah, Angelo Amaranto, James M. Amato Joseph Amatuccio, Christopher Charles Amoroso, Kazuhiro Anai, Calixto Anaya, Jr., Joseph Anchundia, Kermit Charles Anderson, Yvette Constance Anderson, John Andreacchio, Michael Rourke Andrews, Jean Ann Andrucki, Siew-Nya Ang, Joseph Angelini, Jr., Joseph Angelini, Sr., Laura Angilletta, Doreen J. Angrisani, Lorraine Antigua, Peter Paul Apollo, Faustino Apostol, Jr., Frank Thomas Aquilino, Patrick Michael Aranyos, David Arce, Michael George Arczynski, Louis Arena, Adam P. Arias, Michael Armstrong, Jack Charles Aron, Joshua Aron, Richard Avery Aronow, Japhet Jesse Aryee, Patrick Asante, Carl Asaro, Michael Asciak, Michael Edward Asher, Janice Marie Ashley, Thomas J. Ashton, Manuel O. Asitimbay, Gregg Arthur Atlas, Gerald T. Atwood, James Audiffred, Louis Frank Aversano, Jr., Ezra Aviles, Sandy Ayala, Arlene T. Babakitis, Eustace P. Bacchus, John J. Badagliacca, Jane Ellen Baeszler, Robert J. Baierwalter, Andrew J. Bailey, Brett T. Bailey, Tatyana Bakalinskaya, Michael S. Baksh, Sharon M. Balkcom, Michael Andrew Bane, Katherine Bantis, Gerard Baptiste, Walter Baran, Gerard A. Barbara, Paul Vincent Barbaro, James William Barbella, Ivan Kyrillos F. Barbosa, Victor Daniel Barbosa, Colleen Ann Barkow, David Michael Barkway, Matthew Barnes, Sheila Patricia Barnes, Evan J. Baron, Renee Barrett-Arjune, Nathaly Barrios La Cruz, Arthur Thaddeus Barry, Diane G. Barry, Maurice Vincent Barry, Scott D. Bart, Carlton W. Bartels, Guy Barzvi, Inna B. Basina, Alysia Basmajian, Kenneth William Basnicki, Steven Bates, Paul James Battaglia, Walter David Bauer, Jr., Marlyn Capito Bautista, Jasper Baxter, Michele Beale, Paul Frederick Beatini, Jane S. Beatty, Lawrence Ira Beck, Manette Marie Beckles, Carl John Bedigian, Michael Earnest Beekman, Maria A. Behr, Yelena Belilovsky, Nina Patrice Bell, Debbie Bellows, Stephen Elliot Belson, Paul M. Benedetti, Denise Lenore Benedetto, Maria Bengochea, Bryan Craig Bennett, Eric L. Bennett, Oliver Duncan Bennett, Margaret L. Benson, Dominick J. Berardi, James Patrick Berger, Steven Howard Berger, John P. Bergin, Alvin Bergsohn, Daniel Bergstein, Michael J. Berkeley, Donna M. Bernaerts, David W. Bernard, William Bernstein, David M. Berray, David S. Berry, Joseph J. Berry, William Reed Bethke, Timothy Betterly, Edward Frank Beyea, Paul Beyer, Anil Tahilram Bharvaney, Bella J. Bhukhan, Shimmy D. Biegeleisen, Peter Alexander Bielfeld, William G. Biggart, Brian Bilcher, Carl Vincent Bini, Gary Eugene Bird, Joshua David Birnbaum, George John Bishop, Jeffrey Donald Bittner, Albert Balewa Blackman, Jr., Christopher Joseph Blackwell, Susan Leigh Blair, Harry Blanding, Jr., Janice Lee Blaney, Craig Michael Blass, Rita Blau, Richard Middleton Blood, Jr., Michael Andrew Boccardi, John P. Bocchi, Michael Leopoldo Bocchino, Susan M. Bochino, Bruce D. Boehm, Mary Catherine Boffa, Nicholas Andrew Bogdan, Darren Christopher Bohan, Lawrence Francis Boisseau, Vincent M. Boland, Jr., Alan Bondarenko, Andre Bonheur, Jr., Colin Arthur Bonnett, Frank Bonomo, Yvonne Lucia Bonomo, Genieve Bonsignore, 3, Seaon Booker, Sherry Ann Bordeaux, Krystine Bordenabe, Martin Boryczewski, Richard Edward Bosco, John H. Boulton, Francisco Eligio Bourdier, Thomas Harold Bowden, Jr., Kimberly S. Bowers, Veronique Nicole Bowers, Larry Bowman, Shawn Edward Bowman, Jr., Kevin L. Bowser, Gary R. Box, Gennady Boyarsky, Pamela Boyce, Michael Boyle, Alfred Braca, Kevin Bracken, David Brian Brady, Alexander Braginsky, Nicholas W. Brandemarti, Michelle Renee Bratton, Patrice Braut, Lydia E. Bravo, Ronald Michael Breitweiser, Edward A. Brennan III, Francis Henry Brennan, Michael E. Brennan, Peter Brennan, Thomas M. Brennan, Daniel J. Brethel, Gary Lee Bright, Jonathan Briley, Mark A. Brisman, Paul Gary Bristow, Mark Francis Broderick, Herman Charles Broghammer, Keith A. Broomfield, Ethel Brown Janice, Juloise Brown, Lloyd Stanford Brown, Patrick J. Brown, Bettina Browne, Mark Bruce, Richard George Bruehert, Andrew Brunn, Vincent Brunton, Ronald Paul Bucca, Brandon J. Buchanan, Gregory Joseph Buck, Dennis Buckley, Nancy Clare Bueche, Patrick Joseph Buhse, John Edwards Bulaga, Jr., Stephen Bunin, Matthew J. Burke, Thomas Daniel Burke, William Francis Burke, Jr., Donald J. Burns, Kathleen Anne Burns, Keith James Burns, John Patrick Burnside, Irina Buslo, Milton G. Bustillo, Thomas M. Butler, Patrick Byrne, Timothy G. Byrne, Jesus Neptali Cabezas, Lillian Caceres, Brian Joseph Cachia, Steven Dennis Cafiero, Jr., Richard M. Caggiano, Cecile Marella Caguicla, Michael John Cahill, Scott Walter Cahill, Thomas Joseph Cahill, George Cain, Salvatore B. Calabro, Joseph Calandrillo, Philip V. Calcagno, Edward Calderon, Kenneth Marcus Caldwell, Dominick Enrico Calia, Felix Calixte, Frank Callahan, Liam Callahan, Luigi Calvi, Roko Camaj, Michael F. Cammarata, David Otey Campbell, Geoffrey Thomas Campbell, Jill Marie Campbell, Robert Arthur Campbell, Sandra Patricia Campbell, Sean Thomas Canavan, John A. Candela, Vincent Cangelosi, Stephen J. Cangialosi, Lisa Bella Cannava, Brian Cannizzaro, Michael Canty, Louis Anthony Caporicci, Jonathan Neff Cappello, James Christopher Cappers, Richard Michael Caproni, Jose Manuel Cardona, Dennis M. Carey, Steve Carey, Edward Carlino, Michael Scott Carlo, David G. Carlone, Rosemarie C. Carlson, Mark Stephen Carney, Joyce Ann Carpeneto, Ivhan Luis Carpio Bautista, Jeremy M. Carrington, Michael Carroll, Peter Carroll, James Joseph Carson, Jr., Marcia Cecil Carter, James Marcel Cartier, Vivian Casalduc, John Francis Casazza, Paul R. Cascio, Margarito Casillas, Thomas Anthony Casoria, William Otto Caspar, Alejandro Castano, Arcelia Castillo, Germaan Castillo Garcia, Leonard M. Castrianno, Jose Ramon Castro, Richard G. Catarelli, Christopher Sean Caton, Robert John Caufield, Mary Teresa Caulfield, Judson Cavalier, Michael Joseph Cawley, Jason David Cayne, Juan Armando Ceballos, Jason Michael Cefalu, Thomas Joseph Celic, Ana Mercedes Centeno, Joni Cesta, Jeffrey Marc Chairnoff, Swarna Chalasani, William Chalcoff, Eli Chalouh, Charles Lawrence Chan, Mandy Chang, Mark Lawrence Charette, Gregorio Manuel Chavez, Delrose E. Cheatham, Pedro Francisco Checo, Douglas MacMillan Cherry, Stephen Patrick Cherry, Vernon Paul Cherry, Nester Julio Chevalier, Swede Chevalier, Alexander H. Chiang, Dorothy J. Chiarchiaro, Luis Alfonso Chimbo, Robert Chin, Wing Wai Ching, Nicholas Paul Chiofalo, John Chipura, Peter A. Chirchirillo, Catherine Chirls, Kyung Hee Cho, Abul K. Chowdhury, Mohammad Salahuddin Chowdhury, Kirsten L. Christophe, Pamela Chu, Steven Chucknick, Wai Chung, Christopher Ciafardini, Alex F. Ciccone, Frances Ann Cilente, Elaine Cillo, Edna Cintron, Nestor Andre Cintron III, Robert Dominick Cirri, Juan Pablo Cisneros-Alvarez, Benjamin Keefe Clark, Eugene Clark, Gregory Alan Clark, Mannie Leroy Clark, Thomas R. Clark, Christopher Robert Clarke, Donna Marie Clarke, Michael J. Clarke, Suria Rachel Emma Clarke, Kevin Francis Cleary, James D. Cleere, Geoffrey W. Cloud, Susan Marie Clyne, Steven Coakley, Jeffrey Alan Coale, Patricia A. Cody, Daniel Michael Coffey, Jason M. Coffey, Florence G. 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DeFeo, Manuel Del Valle, Jr., Donald Arthur Delapenha, Vito Joseph DeLeo, Danielle Anne Delie, Joseph A. Della Pietra, Andrea DellaBella, Palmina DelliGatti, Colleen Ann Deloughery, Francis Albert DeMartini, Anthony Demas, Martin N. DeMeo, Francis Deming, Carol K. Demitz, Kevin Dennis, Thomas F. Dennis, Jean DePalma, Jose Depena, Robert John Deraney, Michael DeRienzo, Edward DeSimone III, Andrew Desperito, Cindy Ann Deuel, Jerry DeVito, Robert P. Devitt, Jr., Dennis Lawrence Devlin, Gerard Dewan, Sulemanali Kassamali Dhanani, Patricia Florence Di Chiaro, Debra Ann Di Martino, Michael Louis Diagostino, Matthew Diaz, Nancy Diaz, Rafael Arturo Diaz, Michael A. Diaz- Piedra III, Judith Berquis Diaz-Sierra, Joseph Dermot Dickey, Jr., Lawrence Patrick Dickinson, Michael D. Diehl, John Difato, Vincent Difazio, Carl Anthony DiFranco, Donald Difranco, Stephen Patrick Dimino, William John Dimmling, Marisa DiNardo Schorpp, Christopher M. Dincuff, Jeffrey Mark Dingle, Anthony Dionisio, George DiPasquale, Joseph Dipilato, Douglas Frank DiStefano, Ramzi A. Doany, John Joseph Doherty, Melissa C. Doi, Brendan Dolan, Neil Matthew Dollard, James Joseph Domanico, Benilda Pascua Domingo, Carlos Dominguez, Jerome Mark Patrick Dominguez, Kevin W. Donnelly, Jacqueline Donovan, Stephen Scott Dorf, Thomas Dowd, Kevin Dowdell, Mary Yolanda Dowling, Raymond Mathew Downey, Frank Joseph Doyle, Joseph Michael Doyle, Stephen Patrick Driscoll, Mirna A. Duarte, Michelle Beale Duberry, Luke A. Dudek, Christopher Michael Duffy, Gerard Duffy, Michael Joseph Duffy, Thomas W. Duffy, Antoinette Duger, Sareve Dukat, Christopher Joseph Dunne, Richard Anthony Dunstan, Patrick Thomas Dwyer, Joseph Anthony Eacobacci, John Bruce Eagleson, Robert Douglas Eaton, Dean Phillip Eberling, Margaret Ruth Echtermann, Paul Robert Eckna, Constantine Economos, Dennis Michael Edwards, Michael Hardy Edwards, Christine Egan, Lisa Egan, Martin J. Egan, Jr., Michael Egan, Samantha Martin Egan, Carole Eggert, Lisa Caren Ehrlich, John Ernst Eichler, Eric Adam Eisenberg, Daphne Ferlinda Elder, Michael J. Elferis, Mark Joseph Ellis, Valerie Silver Ellis, Albert Alfy William Elmarry, Edgar Hendricks Emery, Jr., Doris Suk-Yuen Eng, Christopher Epps, Ulf Ramm Ericson, Erwin L. Erker, William John Erwin, Jose Espinal, Fanny Espinoza, Bridget Ann Esposito, Francis Esposito, Michael Esposito, William Esposito, Ruben Esquilin, Jr., Sadie Ette, Barbara G. Etzold, Eric Brian Evans, Robert Evans, Meredith Emily June Ewart, Catherine K. Fagan, Patricia Mary Fagan, Keith George Fairben, Sandra Fajardo-Smith, William F. Fallon, William Lawrence Fallon, Jr., Anthony J. Fallone, Jr., Dolores Brigitte Fanelli, John Joseph Fanning, Kathleen Anne Faragher, Thomas Farino, Nancy Carole Farley, Elizabeth Ann Farmer, Douglas Jon Farnum, John G. Farrell, John W. Farrell, Terrence Patrick Farrell, Joseph D. Farrelly, Thomas Patrick Farrelly, Syed Abdul Fatha, Christopher Edward Faughnan, Wendy R. Faulkner, Shannon Marie Fava, Bernard D. Favuzza, Robert Fazio, Jr., Ronald Carl Fazio, William Feehan, Francis Jude Feely, Garth Erin Feeney, Sean B. Fegan, Lee S. Fehling, Peter Adam Feidelberg, Alan D. Feinberg, Rosa Maria Feliciano, Edward Thomas Fergus, Jr., George Ferguson, Henry Fernandez, Judy Hazel Fernandez, Julio Fernandez, Elisa Giselle Ferraina, Anne Marie Sallerin Ferreira, Robert John Ferris, David Francis Ferrugio, Louis V. Fersini, Michael David Ferugio, Bradley James Fetchet, Jennifer Louise Fialko, Kristen Nicole Fiedel, Samuel Fields, Michael Bradley Finnegan, Timothy J. Finnerty, Michael Curtis Fiore, Stephen S R Fiorelli, Sr., Paul M. Fiori, John B. Fiorito, John R. Fischer, Andrew Fisher, Bennett Lawson Fisher, John Roger Fisher, Thomas J. Fisher, Lucy A. Fishman, Ryan D. Fitzgerald, Thomas James Fitzpatrick, Richard P. Fitzsimons, Salvatore Fiumefreddo, Christina Donovan Flannery, Eileen Flecha, Andre G. Fletcher, Carl M. Flickinger, John Joseph Florio, Joseph Walken Flounders, David Fodor, Michael N. Fodor, Stephen Mark Fogel, Thomas Foley, David J. Fontana, Chih Min Foo, Godwin Forde, Donald A. Foreman, Christopher Hugh Forsythe, Claudia Alicia Foster, Noel John Foster, Ana Fosteris, Robert Joseph Foti, Jeffrey Fox, Virginia Fox, Pauline Francis, Virgin Francis, Gary Jay Frank, Morton H. Frank, Peter Christopher Frank, Richard K. Fraser, Kevin J. Frawley, Clyde Frazier, Jr., Lillian Inez Frederick, Andrew Fredricks, Tamitha Freeman, Brett Owen Freiman, Peter L. Freund, Arlene Eva Fried, Alan Wayne Friedlander, Andrew Keith Friedman, Gregg J. Froehner, Peter Christian Fry, Clement A. Fumando, Steven Elliot Furman, Paul Furmato, Fredric Neal Gabler, Richard Samuel Federick Gabrielle, James Andrew Gadiel, Pamela Lee Gaff, Ervin Vincent Gailliard, Deanna Lynn Galante, Grace Catherine Galante, Anthony Edward Gallagher, Daniel James Gallagher, John Patrick Gallagher, Lourdes Galletti, Cono E. Gallo, Vincenzo Gallucci, Thomas E. Galvin, Giovanna Galletta Gambale, Thomas Gambino, Jr., Giann Franco Gamboa, Peter Ganci, Ladkat K. Ganesh, Claude Michael Gann, Osseni Garba, Charles William Garbarini, Ceasar Garcia, David Garcia, Juan Garcia, Marlyn Del Carmen Garcia, Christopher S. Gardner, Douglas Benjamin Gardner, Harvey J. Gardner III, Jeffrey Brian Gardner, Thomas Gardner, William Arthur Gardner, Francesco Garfi, Rocco Nino Gargano, James M. Gartenberg, Matthew David Garvey, Bruce Gary, Boyd Alan Gatton, Donald Richard Gavagan, Jr., Terence D. Gazzani, Gary Geidel, Paul Hamilton Geier, Julie M. Geis, Peter G. Gelinas, Steven Paul Geller, Howard G. Gelling, Peter Victor Genco, Jr., Steven Gregory Genovese, Alayne Gentul, Edward F. Geraghty, Suzanne Geraty, Ralph Gerhardt, Robert Gerlich, Denis P. Germain, Marina Romanovna Gertsberg, Susan M. Getzendanner, James G. Geyer, Joseph M. Giaccone, Vincent Francis Giammona, Debra Lynn Gibbon, James Andrew Giberson, Craig Neil Gibson, Ronnie E. Gies, Laura A. Giglio, Andrew Clive Gilbert, Timothy Paul Gilbert, Paul Stuart Gilbey, Paul John Gill, Mark Y. Gilles, Evan Gillette, Ronald Lawrence Gilligan, Rodney C. Gillis, Laura Gilly, John F. Ginley, Donna Marie Giordano, Jeffrey John Giordano, John Giordano, Steven A. Giorgetti, Martin Giovinazzo, Kum-Kum Girolamo, Salvatore Gitto, Cynthia Giugliano, Mon Gjonbalaj, Dianne Gladstone, Keith Glascoe, Thomas Irwin Glasser, Harry Glenn, Barry H. Glick, Steven Glick, John T. Gnazzo, William Robert Godshalk, Michael Gogliormella, Brian Fredric Goldberg, Jeffrey Grant Goldflam, Michelle Goldstein, Monica Goldstein, Steven Goldstein, Andrew H. Golkin, Dennis James Gomes, Enrique Antonio Gomez, Jose Bienvenido Gomez, Manuel Gomez, Jr., Wilder Alfredo Gomez, Jenine Nicole Gonzalez, Mauricio Gonzalez, Rosa Gonzalez, Calvin J. Gooding, Harry Goody, Kiran Reddy Gopu, Catherine C. Gorayeb, Kerene Gordon, Sebastian Gorki, Kieran Joseph Gorman, Thomas Edward Gorman, Michael Edward Gould, Yuji Goya, Jon Richard Grabowski, Christopher Michael Grady, Edwin J. Graf III, David Martin Graifman, Gilbert Franco Granados, Elvira Granitto, Winston Arthur Grant, Christopher S. Gray, James Michael Gray, Tara McCloud Gray, Linda Catherine Grayling, John M. Grazioso, Timothy George Grazioso, Derrick Auther Green, Wade B. Green, Elaine Myra Greenberg, Gayle R. Greene, James Arthur Greenleaf, Jr., Eileen Marsha Greenstein, Elizabeth Martin Gregg, Denise Gregory, Donald H. Gregory, Florence Moran Gregory, Pedro Grehan, John Michael Griffin, Tawanna Sherry Griffin, Joan Donna Griffith, Warren Grifka, Ramon Grijalvo, Joseph F. Grillo, David Joseph Grimner, Kenneth George Grouzalis, Joseph Grzelak, Matthew James Grzymalski, Robert Joseph Gschaar, Liming Gu, Jose Guadalupe, Cindy Yan Zhu Guan, Joel Guevara Gonzalez, Geoffrey E. Guja, Joseph Gullickson, Babita Girjamatie Guman, Douglas Brian Gurian, Janet Ruth Gustafson, Philip T. Guza, Barbara Guzzardo, Peter M. Gyulavary, Gary Robert Haag, Andrea Lyn Haberman, Barbara Mary Habib, Philip Haentzler, Nezam A. Hafiz, Karen Elizabeth Hagerty, Steven Michael Hagis, Mary Lou Hague, David Halderman, Maile Rachel Hale, Richard B. Hall, Vaswald George Hall, Robert J. Halligan, Vincent Gerard Halloran, James Douglas Halvorson, Mohammad Salman Hamdani, Felicia Hamilton, Robert Hamilton, Frederic K. Han, Christopher J. Hanley, Sean S. Hanley, Valerie Joan Hanna, Thomas Hannafin, Kevin James Hannaford, Michael Lawrence Hannan, Dana R Hannon, Vassilios G. Haramis, James A. Haran, Jeffrey Pike Hardy, Timothy John Hargrave, Daniel Edward Harlin, Frances Haros, Harvey Harrell, Stephen G. Harrell, Melissa Marie Harrington, Aisha Anne Harris, Stewart Dennis Harris, John Patrick Hart, John Clinton Hartz, Emeric Harvey, Thomas Theodore Haskell, Jr., Timothy Haskell, Joseph John Hasson III, Leonard W. Hatton, Terence S. Hatton, Michael Haub, Timothy Aaron Haviland, Donald G. Havlish, Jr., Anthony Hawkins, Nobuhiro Hayatsu, Philip Hayes, William Ward Haynes, Scott Jordan Hazelcorn, Michael K. Healey, Roberta B. Heber, Charles Francis Xavier Heeran, John F. Heffernan, H. Joseph Heller, Jr., Joann L. Heltibridle, Mark F. Hemschoot, Ronnie Lee Henderson, Brian Hennessey, Michelle Marie Henrique, Joseph Henry, William Henry, John Christopher Henwood, Robert Allan Hepburn, Mary Herencia, Lindsay C. Herkness III, Harvey Robert Hermer, Claribel Hernandez, Eduardo Hernandez, Nuberto Hernandez, Raul Hernandez, Gary Herold, Jeffrey A. Hersch, Thomas Hetzel, Brian Hickey, Ysidro Hidalgo, Timothy Higgins, Robert D. W. Higley II, Todd Russell Hill, Clara Victorine Hinds, Neal O. Hinds, Mark D. Hindy, Katsuyuki Hirai, Heather Malia Ho, Tara Yvette Hobbs, Thomas Anderson Hobbs, James J. Hobin, Robert Wayne Hobson, DaJuan Hodges, Ronald George Hoerner, Patrick A. Hoey, Marcia Hoffman, Stephen G. Hoffman, Frederick Joseph Hoffmann, Michele L. Hoffmann, Judith Florence Hofmiller, Thomas Warren Hohlweck, Jr., Jonathan R. Hohmann, John Holland, Joseph F. Holland, Elizabeth Holmes, Thomas Holohan, Bradley Hoorn, James P. Hopper, Montgomery McCullough Hord, Michael Horn, Matthew Douglas Horning, Robert L. Horohoe, Jr., Aaron Horwitz, Charles Houston, Uhuru G. Houston, George Howard, Michael C. Howell, Steven Leon Howell, Jennifer L. Howley, Milagros Hromada, Marian R. Hrycak, Stephen Huczko, Jr., Kris Robert Hughes, Paul Rexford Hughes, Robert Thomas Hughes, Thomas Hughes, Timothy Robert Hughes, Susan Huie, Lamar Hulse, William Christopher Hunt, Kathleen Anne Hunt-Casey, Joseph Hunter, Robert R. Hussa, Abid Hussain, Thomas Edward Hynes, Walter G. Hynes, Joseph Anthony Ianelli, Zuhtu Ibis, Jonathan Lee Ielpi, Michael Iken, Daniel Ilkanayev, Frederick Ill, Jr., Abraham Nethanel Ilowitz, Anthony P. Infante, Jr., Louis S. Inghilterra, Jr., Christopher Noble Ingrassia, Paul Innella, Stephanie Veronica Irby, Douglas Irgang, Kristin A. Irvine Ryan, Todd Antione Isaac, Erik Isbrandtsen, Taizo Ishikawa, Aram Iskenderian, Jr., John F. Iskyan, Kazushige Ito, Aleksandr Valeryevich Ivantsov, Virginia May Jablonski, Brooke Alexandra Jackman, Aaron Jeremy Jacobs, Ariel Louis Jacobs, Jason Kyle Jacobs, Michael Grady Jacobs, Steven A. Jacobson, Ricknauth Jaggernauth, Jake Denis Jagoda, Yudh Vir Singh Jain, Maria Jakubiak, Ernest James, Gricelda E. James, Priscilla James, Mark Steven Jardim, Muhammadou Jawara, Francois Jean-Pierre, Maxima Jean-Pierre, Paul Edward Jeffers, Alva Cynthia Jeffries Sanchez, Joseph Jenkins, Jr., Alan Keith Jensen, Prem N. Jerath, Farah Jeudy, Hweidar Jian, Eliezer Jimenez, Jr., Luis Jimenez, Jr., Fernando Jimenez-Molina, Charles Gregory John, Nicholas John, LaShawna Johnson, Scott Michael Johnson, William R. Johnston, Allison Horstmann Jones, Arthur Joseph Jones, Brian Leander Jones, Christopher D. Jones, Donald T. Jones, Donald W. Jones, Linda Jones, Mary S. Jones, Andrew Jordan, Robert Thomas Jordan, Albert Gunnia Joseph, Guylene Joseph, Ingeborg Joseph, Karl Henry Joseph, Stephen Joseph, Jane Eileen Josiah, Anthony Jovic, Angel L. Juarbe, Jr., Karen Sue Juday, Mychal F. Judge, Paul William Jurgens, Thomas Edward Jurgens, Kacinga Kabeya, Shashikiran Lakshmikantha Kadaba, Gavkharoy Kamardinova, Shari Kandell, Howard Lee Kane, Jennifer Lynn Kane, Vincent D. Kane, Joon Koo Kang, Sheldon Robert Kanter, Deborah H. Kaplan, Alvin Peter Kappelmann, Jr., Charles Karczewski, William A. Karnes, Douglas Gene Karpiloff, Charles L. Kasper, Andrew K. Kates, John Katsimatides, Robert Michael Kaulfers, Don Jerome Kauth, Jr., Hideya Kawauchi, Edward T. Keane, Richard M. Keane, Lisa Yvonne Kearney-Griffin, Karol Ann Keasler, Paul Hanlon Keating, Leo Russell Keene III, Joseph John Keller, Peter R. Kellerman, Joseph P. Kellett, Frederick H. Kelley, Jr., James Joseph Kelly, Joseph A. Kelly, Maurice P. Kelly, Richard John Kelly, Jr., Thomas Michael Kelly, Thomas Richard Kelly, Thomas W. Kelly, Timothy Colin Kelly, William Hill Kelly, Jr., Robert Clinton Kennedy, Thomas J. Kennedy, John R. Keohane, Ronald T. Kerwin, Howard L. Kestenbaum, Douglas D. Ketcham, Ruth Ellen Ketler, Boris Khalif, Sarah Khan, Taimour Firaz Khan, Rajesh Khandelwal, Oliva Khemrat, SeiLai Khoo, Michael Kiefer, Satoshi Kikuchihara, Andrew Jay-Hoon Kim, Lawrence D. Kim, Mary Jo Kimelman, Andrew M. King, Lucille Teresa King, Robert King, Jr., Lisa King-Johnson, Takashi Kinoshita, Chris Michael Kirby, Howard Barry Kirschbaum, Glenn Davis Kirwin, Helen Crossin Kittle, Richard Joseph Klares, Peter Anton Klein, Alan David Kleinberg, Karen Joyce Klitzman, Ronald Philip Kloepfer, Evgueni Kniazev, Andrew Knox, Thomas Patrick Knox, Rebecca Lee Koborie, Deborah A. Kobus, Gary Edward Koecheler, Frank J. Koestner, Ryan Kohart, Vanessa Kolpak, Irina Kolpakova, Suzanne Kondratenko, Abdoulaye Kone, Bon-Seok Koo, Dorota Kopiczko, Scott Kopytko, Bojan Kostic, Danielle Kousoulis, John J. Kren, William E. Krukowski, Lyudmila Ksido, Shekhar Kumar, Kenneth Kumpel, Frederick Kuo, Jr., Patricia Kuras, Nauka Kushitani, Thomas Kuveikis, Victor Kwarkye, Kui Fai Kwok, Angela Reed Kyte, Andrew La Corte, Amarnauth Lachhman, James Patrick Ladley, Joseph A. LaFalce, Jeanette Louise Lafond-Menichino, David Laforge, Michael Laforte, Alan Charles LaFrance, Juan Lafuente, Neil Kwong-Wah Lai, Vincent Anthony Laieta, William David Lake, Franco Lalama, Chow Kwan Lam, Stephen LaMantia, Amy Hope Lamonsoff, Nickola Lampley, Robert Lane, Brendan Mark Lang, Rosanne P. Lang, Vanessa Langer, Mary Louise Langley, Peter J. Langone, Thomas Michael Langone, Michele Bernadette Lanza, Ruth Sheila Lapin, Carol Ann LaPlante, Ingeborg Lariby, Robin Blair Larkey, Christopher Randall Larrabee, Hamidou S. Larry, Scott Larsen, John Adam Larson, Gary Edward Lasko, Nicholas Craig Lassman, Paul Laszczynski, Jeffrey G. LaTouche, Charles Laurencin, Stephen James Lauria, Maria LaVache, Denis Francis Lavelle, Jeannine Mary LaVerde, Anna A. Laverty, Steven Lawn, Robert Lawrence, Nathaniel Lawson, Eugen Gabriel Lazar, James Patrick Leahy, Joseph Gerard Leavey, Neil Joseph Leavy, Leon Lebor, Kenneth Charles Ledee, Alan J. Lederman, Elena F. Ledesma, Alexis Leduc, David S. Lee, Gary H. Lee, Hyun Joon Lee, Juanita Lee, Kathryn Blair Lee, Linda C. Lee, Lorraine Mary Lee, Myoung Woo Lee, Richard Y. Lee, Stuart Soo-Jin Lee, Yang Der Lee, Stephen Paul Lefkowitz, Adriana Legro, Edward Joseph Lehman, Eric Andrew Lehrfeld, David Leistman, David Prudencio Lemagne, Joseph Anthony Lenihan, John Joseph Lennon, Jr., John Robinson Lenoir, Jorge Luis Leon, Matthew Gerard Leonard, Michael Lepore, Charles A. Lesperance, Jeff Leveen, John Dennis Levi, Alisha Caren Levin, Neil David Levin, Robert Levine, Robert Michael Levine, Shai Levinhar, Adam Jay Lewis, Margaret Susan Lewis, Ye Wei Liang, Orasri Liangthanasarn, Daniel F. Libretti, Ralph Licciardi, Edward Lichtschein, Steven Barry Lillianthal, Carlos R. Lillo, Craig Damian Lilore, Arnold A. Lim, Darya Lin, Wei Rong Lin, Nickie L. Lindo, Thomas V. Linehan, Jr., Robert Thomas Linnane, Alan P. Linton, Jr., Diane Theresa Lipari, Kenneth Lira, Francisco Alberto Liriano, Lorraine Lisi, Paul Lisson, Vincent M. Litto, Ming-Hao Liu, Nancy Liz, Harold Lizcano, Martin Lizzul, George A. Llanes, Elizabeth C. Logler, Catherine Lisa Loguidice, Jerome Robert Lohez, Michael William Lomax, Laura Maria Longing, Salvatore Lopes, Daniel Lopez, George Lopez, Luis Manuel Lopez, Manuel L. Lopez, Joseph Lostrangio, Chet Dek Louie, Stuart Seid Louis, Joseph Lovero, Jenny Seu Kueng Low Wong, Michael W. Lowe, Garry W. Lozier, John Peter Lozowsky, Charles Peter Lucania, Edward Hobbs Luckett, Mark Gavin Ludvigsen, Lee Charles Ludwig, Sean Thomas Lugano, Daniel Lugo, Marie Lukas, William Lum, Jr., Michael P. Lunden, Christopher Lunder, Anthony Luparello, Gary Frederick Lutnick, William Lutz, Linda Anne Luzzicone, Alexander Lygin, Farrell Peter Lynch, James Francis Lynch, Louise A. Lynch, Michael Cameron Lynch, Michael F. Lynch, Michael Francis Lynch, Richard D. Lynch, Jr., Robert Henry Lynch, Jr., Sean P. Lynch, Sean Patrick Lynch, Michael J. Lyons, Monica Anne Lyons, Patrick Lyons, Robert Francis Mace, Jan Maciejewski, Catherine Fairfax Macrae, Richard Blaine Madden, Simon Maddison Noell Maerz, Jenniean Maffeo, Joseph Maffeo, Jay Robert Magazine, Brian Magee, Charles Wilson Magee, Joseph V. Maggitti, Ronald Magnuson, Daniel L. Maher, Thomas Anthony Mahon, William J. Mahoney, Joseph Daniel Maio, Takashi Makimoto, Abdu Ali Malahi, Debora I. Maldonado, Myrna T. Maldonado-Agosto, Alfred Russell Maler, Gregory James Malone, Edward Francis Maloney III, Joseph Maloney, Gene Edward Maloy, Christian Maltby, Francisco Miguel Mancini, Joseph Mangano, Sara Elizabeth Manley, Debra Mannetta, Marion Victo

We remember

From across the United States, readers recall the horror of 9/11.
Lee Enterprises' news organizations asked readers to submit their memories of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
Here's a sampling of their responses.

➤ ***Read more anniversary coverage on our website***



MARK LENNIHAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Annabelle Banievicz and her son, Oriel Vanega, 7, attend a candlelight vigil Sept. 14, 2001, at Union Square in New York, not far from the site of the terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center's twin towers.

Masood Akhtar

MIDDLETON, WISCONSIN

That day, I still remember those two keywords — "Islamic terrorists" — used by some of our politicians and most mainstream media while describing the attacks. We, as Muslims, felt that day that this association of terrorism with Islam would pose a significant threat to the lives of 3.5 million American Muslims, and it did. Hate crimes against Muslims rose substantially.

Since 9/11, more people have been killed by homegrown hate groups (racially or ethnically motivated groups who advocate for the superiority of the white race and those who are anti-government) in the U.S. than by foreign terrorists.

I applaud the recent recognition by the White House that domestic terrorism is the biggest national security threat to the U.S. today. As a result, the Biden administration on June 15, 2021, released the first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism to avoid another Jan. 6 attack on our Capitol or on U.S. soil.

But we, as citizens, also have a responsibility of educating people, including the hate groups, about what made America exceptional. Let's open our ears and hearts for each other; engage to fight our true enemy: fear, anger and hate. Recognize that diversity is our strength, unity is our power, and the U.S. constitution is our hope. Stand up for the freedom of others, while enjoying ours. And always remember that people are not born with hate; they are taught to hate. We can easily teach them how to love.

Wisconsin State Journal
Madison, Wisconsin

Drew Daniels

SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER
AT HICKORY (NORTH CAROLINA) HIGH SCHOOL

That semester, I was teaching American history and civics classes at Hickory High. Between first and second periods, my department chair came into my classroom, almost sprint-walking. Without breaking stride on his way through to a neighboring classroom, he pointed at my computer and said, "Go to CNN." I could tell it was urgent. I did so immediately and quickly read what I could before class started. Of course, I was stunned numb.

This was before students had smartphones so I broke the news to my second-period class. None of us knew how to react. I was conscious of trying to convey the magnitude and sadness of what was evidently happening while remaining collected. That was almost an out-of-body experience; I heard myself say the words. I knew we were living through history. There was a heavy feeling throughout the building that day, like at a wake.

We all had a need to see images of what had happened — not out of morbid fascination but I think otherwise we just couldn't process it. It sounded impossible. I didn't have a projector for my computer screen then, so I pulled up CNN's website and turned my monitor toward the students. That website crashed for part of the afternoon. My last class got out of their desks and came forward to get a closer look. I hadn't invited them to do that but I didn't mind. They sat on the floor and we just stared in silence.

Hickory Daily Record
Hickory, North Carolina

Bernie Scolaro

SIOUX CITY, IOWA

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was at West High giving info and tours to the new freshman class. I was showing students where my office was located, at which time my secretary said for me to see her as soon as I was done as she had something to tell me.

She knew I was from New York so what was happening (unbeknownst to me) was more personal than most at the school. As soon as the period ended, I saw the horrific image on the TV of the buildings that went down.

I called my parents in New York to check on them and the rest of the day was trying to work and trying to digest what was happening. I remember going to a prayer service later that night. For me, it's not so much where I was when I found out but where I needed to be afterward. As a Red Cross disaster services volunteer, I knew that when I could, I had to be there to help.

Approximately a month later, I headed to New York for three weeks to provide meals to workers and people affected by the attacks, including the firefighters at ground zero. As much as I would love to say that the impact was so profound that I instinctively now have a better appreciation of time and spending it with loved ones, everyday responsibilities and anxieties still get in the way.

Although I will never forget the events of that day and the aftermath I saw firsthand, I still must actively remind myself each day to appreciate time, life and love.

Sioux City Journal
Sioux City, Iowa

Blair Chewning

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

I call them "where-were-you days." Where were you when President Kennedy was assassinated? Where were you when the Challenger exploded? Where were you at 9:45 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001? Each holds a certain significance, but none more indelibly etched in my mind than 9/11.

Accompanying 110 students, 87 parents, and five other teachers, I was on the lead bus entering the gates of Mount Vernon for Collegiate School's annual fourth-grade trip. Twenty years ago very few people owned cellphones, but a mother on the second bus did. Her husband called minutes before our arrival to relate the horrific events from the twin towers and again at 9:40, with frantic news of the attack on the Pentagon.

Mount Vernon staff greeted us, while students and parents remained on the buses, all unaware of the situation just miles away. The teachers gathered on the sidewalk to develop a plan, keenly aware nothing in our training or years of experience had prepared us for this. A quick call to our school resulted in the decision to return home immediately, as there were rumors I-95 would close.

Seeing the Pentagon smoke in the distance and witnessing Quantico vehicles race up the interstate, mobilized for what would later be called the "war on terror" — these are the tangible takeaways of 9/11. What was said on each bus to help inquisitive children and stunned parents feel calm and reassured there was and is still good in this world? My memory's less clear on that.

Richmond Times-Dispatch
Richmond, Virginia

Cheryl Young

BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

I was at a long meeting in the basement at State Farm Corporate South. When it ended, I came up to my desk and the coworker across the aisle told me a plane had hit the World Trade Center. Thinking it was a small plane, we both speculated about what kind of problem could cause a small plane to miss seeing the building.

Then we heard there was another plane. A horrible sinking feeling filled my stomach. It was deliberate. I remember stopping and saying a prayer. Soon, the cafeteria with several TVs was filled with employees watching the horror.

When I went home, it was impossible to stop watching. I remember staying up late in disbelief.

A day later, the young people from Normal West Marching Band decided to skip a competition that weekend and play at Schnucks grocery store. My two daughters were among them. Tears poured down the faces of people going in and out of the store as they heard our national anthem and other songs played. Our country stood together under one flag. I think of that today and wish it was that way now.

The Pantagraph
Bloomington, Illinois

Carl Baker

BETHANY, ILLINOIS

I remember 9/11 like it was yesterday. I was in Washington, D.C., about a mile from the Pentagon. I was there for a business trip and was due to take a tour of the Pentagon that very day but could not rearrange my schedule. As I heard about the towers and watched the TV monitors, the meeting was adjourned and then we heard about the Pentagon.

When I walked outside the building, it was utter chaos. People begging others to get in the car with them, saying they didn't want to be alone. Fire trucks driving on the sidewalks to maneuver the gridlock traffic trying to respond. All flights grounded and no cars being rented to leave town.

Yes, I remember the day well. I can close my eyes and still see the mental image of that day. It's hard to believe it's been 20 years. My daughter was just 1 year old and now she is 21.

Herald & Review
Decatur, Illinois

Becky Hollar

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

I was in seventh grade in New York state, two hours north of New York City. My teacher came to our study hall and said, "The World Trade Center is down." We thought he meant the stock market crashed. Then he said the twin towers were hit by planes and collapsed. I remember the fear everyone felt, the images on constant replay on the news, the moments of silence held at school and sporting events, rejoicing when people were found alive in the rubble, feeling sad when the death toll rose. I remember people coming together and a renewed sense of patriotism. Part of me still feels some of the emotions from that day when I see the New York skyline without those two towers.

The News & Advance
Lynchburg, Virginia

John Davis III

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

I was in Baltimore on business when 9/11 occurred. I could not get back to Winston-Salem as planes, trains, buses were all grounded and no rental cars available. I was due to deliver the convocation talk at the UNC School of the Arts the next day and had worked diligently on my message to the students. A friend loaned me his car and it was an eerie drive from Baltimore to Winston-Salem. Virtually no cars on the road, service stations closed, restaurants and shopping centers closed. I could see the smoke rising from the Pentagon while driving on I-95 through Washington, D.C. It was while driving and listening to the radio that I realized that the speech that I had written and practiced could not be the speech that I needed to deliver to so many high school and college students at the School of the Arts — many away from home for the first time. Thus, I stayed up virtually all night rewriting my talk.

Upon arrival at the auditorium the next day, I found a packed house. Standing-room only — 1,100 kids, faculty and staff were present. And they all stayed after the program was concluded. Almost no one left. People were simply scared and did not know what to do as we were in new territory, and for the first time, the U.S. had been attacked by terrorists on our own soil. Thank God, I offered a message of optimism, hope and our ability to pull together as a citizenry. I still believe that today.

Winston-Salem Journal
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Susan Stoya

LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK

I was working in a school when I heard that a plane had hit one of the towers at the World Trade Center. As I walked into the library, where teachers had the TV on, I saw the first tower fall, and became sick to my stomach, thinking that my brother-in-law and my step-brother, both EMTs in Manhattan, might be in those towers.

I frantically started trying to call my relatives, but all of the lines were tied up and I could not get through. I finally heard that they were safe but on their way to the site as was my sister's husband, an NYPD officer. My sister sadly told me how my brother-in-law came home the first few nights covered in soot and dust, spending hours on end doing the "bucket brigade" — knowing they would not find anyone but continuing the work anyway.

My son had soccer practice that afternoon at the Jenkinsville field. I was dismayed that anyone could be having fun that day. My heart broke watching the news, knowing my family members could easily have been among those lost. My friend was a school psychologist who worked to comfort the trauma for numerous students who lost parents that day. My step-brother worked in the morgue set up on the piers. There were so many heroes that day and in the aftermath. I am proud of so many for their bravery and courage on Sept. 11 and every day since then.

The Post-Star
Glens Falls, New York

Beth Meenehan

DARDENNE PRAIRIE, MISSOURI

My husband was in the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

He couldn't have his cellphone with him there for security reasons. He had no idea what was going on, or that the entire world was watching what was going on, including me.

I couldn't reach him and didn't know if he was dead or alive. I was able to go out of the building I was working in, about 5 miles away, and I could see the enormous black cloud that enveloped the Pentagon and a lot of Arlington.

All of the phone lines in the entire metro area were jammed for hours. Both of our families tried to reach me. His wonderful dad somehow got through. He, of course, asked if Mike was OK. I lied to him and said Mike was fine. I didn't know the truth.

Mike finally got hold of me at 4 p.m. I just remembered crying. Mike was coming home to me that night. The kids didn't lose their dad, but life would never be the same again.

It was the worst day of my life … ever. We prayed for those whose day was worse.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
St. Louis



CHERYL HATCH, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Josephine Combs, 42, from Orlando, Fla., cries as she waits with her luggage at the Seattle Tacoma International Airport on Sept. 11, 2001. Combs was in flight to Orlando when the captain announced they were returning to Seattle following the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

Yvonne L. Spaulding

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

We were living in Flagstaff at the time. I was getting ready for my teaching position at Northern Arizona University in the School of Communication. It was a speech day for my students. I saw what happened on television. I was shocked, as most everyone else, but I drove in and headed for my classroom.

There were TVs stationed on both sides of the corridors of the classrooms so students and staff could keep track of what was happening. Most everyone was in class that morning, with a few exceptions. My first speaker that morning was an international student from Iran, I believe. I spoke with her privately before she spoke and asked if she felt comfortable speaking. She said yes. She gave a powerful speech, and at the end of it, the entire class gave her an enthusiastic, lengthy applause. She had tears in her eyes, and so did I.

At that time, we weren't sure who was responsible for the attacks, or what countries were involved. In spite of all the raw feelings in that classroom, I was so proud of everyone who showed up for class, and especially for such an enthusiastic supportive gesture for their fellow classmate at the conclusion of her speech. I will always remember that day.

Arizona Daily Sun
Flagstaff, Arizona

Ruth McWilliams

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA

On Monday, Sept. 10, 2001, I started my ninth week of a new job at the Pentagon. After Tuesday, Sept. 11, I didn't work in the Pentagon again because my office was lost to smoke and fire.

Pre-internet, the TV gave you "breaking news." Colleagues told me about watching planes striking the World Trade Center. When the plane struck the Pentagon, I was on a phone call, and I thought it was an earthquake.

My colleagues came in, and we decided to evacuate. We streamed out the door, into the beautiful fall day. My foot kicked a piece of metal, curved with sprocket holes, and I thought how much trouble the contractors would have for leaving debris from the Pentagon's ongoing renovation. I didn't know it was a piece of the plane.

As we rounded the corner of the building, I saw Marines running down the hill, in short sleeve dress uniforms, running toward the conflagration that burned the side of the building. Their selfless act was overwhelming, both in the moment and in retrospect.

We moved away from the building and tried to account for everyone. Having my purse, I gave $20 to someone who came out with nothing. Living one mile away, it took me hours to get home, waiting for trains and buses that weren't running. My phone allowed someone to call family. My boss reached her husband who reached my husband to share that we were safe. Colleagues died; I am grateful to live.

The Daily Progress
Charlottesville, Virginia



JULIE JACOBSON, ASSOCIATED PRESS

From left: Shannon Barry, Lisa Starr and Michelle Wagner, all of Hershey, Pa., comfort each other as they listen to a memorial service in 2002 for the victims of the Flight 93 terrorist attack near Shanksville, Pa.

Nancy D. Becker

VALPARAISO, INDIANA

Sept. 11, 2001, I was visiting family in Kennesaw, Georgia. The television pictures of the crumbling of the twin towers filled me with an emotional combination of horror and fear and anger. Later in the day, seeking a place to pray and deal with my strong feelings, I went to the top of nearby Kennesaw Mountain, a quiet place with a lovely view of downtown Atlanta. It is a park memorializing a last-ditch battle of the Civil War.

There is a tree-lined path that I have often walked on my visits to Georgia. The historic trail passes the still-entrenched cannons from the brutal conflict of 140 years earlier. I felt a rising rage that engulfed me with a sense of the chaotic stupidity of it. In the suffocating aura of that September day, I was staring at cannons that had been placed and maintained with pride as if something noble had been accomplished by their use. I had never considered myself a pacifist, but on that day I experienced a primeval anger at the blindness of the human race.

The Times of Northwest Indiana
Munster, Indiana

Justin Hendrix

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VIRGINIA

I grew up in Mount Hermon and Blairs and attended Chatham High School. After I graduated from the College of William & Mary, I moved to New York to get a job in publishing. In 2001, I was a junior executive at The Economist magazine. I was at my desk in midtown Manhattan on the morning of Sept. 11. I was listening to WNYC — the New York Public Radio station — when I learned from the broadcast that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers.

I walked upstairs to the editorial department to switch on a television, and watched live as the second plane hit. I remember instantly the recognition that this was no accident.

Walking outside to stare down 6th Avenue, we could see the smoke billowing from lower Manhattan. The rest of the day was a blur. In the office, journalists were trying to do their jobs — reporting on the story as it happened. Some of our fellow employees were in Lower Manhattan, running a conference that day. We tried to account for them. Emotions were high.

With some fellow employees, I tried to donate blood, but the lines to do so were too long. As it would later become clear, there would be little need for it anyway — there were few survivors when the towers fell.

By the time I made it home to Brooklyn that evening, the air was thick with ash and smoke. Singed spreadsheets fell from the sky in the middle of my block — I remember one was a balance sheet from Standard Chartered Bank, which had offices in 7 World Trade Center.

The months after the attack were a frightening and tumultuous period. Everyone had a connection to someone who had died. Candles and makeshift memorials littered the streets. I think of Alysia Basmajian — not a friend of mine, but a friend of my fellow May 2000 graduates of William & Mary. She left a daughter and a husband behind that day.

Every year, the city memorializes the anniversary of the attack with two bright lights that shine vertically into the sky from the site. Now when I see them, I don't think simply of that day. I think of the long stretch of days since — and all the mistakes this country made in response to the terror attack.

I think of the Taliban flag, flying again over Afghanistan — and the oceans of blood spilt there and in Iraq. I think of torture at Bagram, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. I think of the two decades of terror visited on my Muslim and South Asian neighbors by the NYPD and the FBI. I think of Donald Trump — the bigotry of his campaign and his presidency, and his enduring appeal to so many. I think of the image of a man, falling to his death from the burning towers, and its grim symmetry with the image of another man falling to his death from an aircraft he tried to cling to as it took off at the Kabul airport. I think of desperate people, no different from you or me.

In 2001, the stench of the smoke from the World Trade Center pit hung in the city's air for weeks after the attack. I can still remember that smell, and when I do I taste it in my mouth. Every life lost that day was a tragedy. But so was our collective response – and the hundreds of thousands of lives it has cost. From that, the air still hasn't cleared.

Register & Bee
Danville, Virginia

Seth Grossman

ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was driving north on the (Garden State) Parkway for a morning court appearance in Jersey City. As I approached the big bridge over the Raritan, the radio host said he had gotten calls that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. I looked at the twin towers in the distance. I saw thick black smoke pouring out of one of them. I could not imagine how any pilot could crash into any building on such a brilliantly clear sunny day.

When I got on Exit 14 for Jersey City, all traffic was bumper to bumper in both directions and stopped. I was directly facing the towers. I then saw a large jet plane slowly approach. It seemed as if it were giving people on board a closer look of what was happening. Then it suddenly turned sharply into the other tower. Then the horrible fireball. I and everyone then knew somebody was using planes to kill us. I noticed one large jet plane after another taking off from Newark Airport behind me. I thought what perfect, helpless targets we all were in our cars and buses, unable to move. I was scared.

The next day, I attended a real estate closing in Atlantic City. The buyers were a Muslim couple. Nobody said a word about what happened the day before. There was no anger. No apologies. But there was no small talk. We all said just enough to get the needed papers signed and exchanged.

Press of Atlantic City
Pleasantville, New Jersey

Kathy Roeder

KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

On Sept. 11, 2001, I woke up in the hospital holding my new baby daughter in my arms. I remember looking at her with so much peace and excitement, but those feelings quickly turned to heartache and grief for our nation.

I remember my husband calling me and telling me about the two planes hitting the twin towers. I was in shock, but still not realizing that the nightmare was far from over. As the details of the attacks kept coming, all I could do was hold my baby and pray for all of those innocent people who lost their lives that day. I remember looking down at my daughter and thinking it was so ironic that as I celebrated her new life, so many people were mourning the loss of their loved ones.

As the day went on, people started to panic about other possible attacks, gas prices, and how our economy was going to be affected. I remember getting out of the hospital that evening and making my husband drive us straight to the gas station. There was a long line of cars and gas had doubled in price. Over the next few weeks my mom would come over and we would watch the news together, and just be thankful we had each other. Every day I look at my beautiful daughter I will always remember that unforgettable day and all of the innocent people who lost their lives for our country.

Kearney Hub
Kearney, Nebraska

Kelly Ehrlich

BOWLING GREEN, VIRGINIA

It was chaotic going north, not the regular (Interstate) 95 chaos, but different. Every radio station was talking about it. When we got to Quantico, black Suburbans fell in behind us.

We started seeing smoke plumes. It was white, so I thought: How bad can it be? I had no idea. It was unfathomable. We parked by a huge, beautiful tree and it was game on. My partner and I were detailed to the center of the Pentagon to help set up rehab for the incoming firefighters and patients. It was the first time I had ever seen a helicopter gunship with a man holding a gun flying patterns over our heads. We waited hours for patients who never came because they were all dead.

I would never look at the world the same way again.

I grew more as a medic, and a person than I thought was possible. I got awards, and plaques, and pins that I couldn't keep because I couldn't bear to look at them. My mom keeps them in case I ever want them back. I won't.

I don't watch the news leading up to the anniversaries, and now because of the fall of Afghanistan, I'm not sure I will ever watch the news again. I wonder if all of that was for nothing. I hate the word hero; there is nothing heroic about what I did that day.

The Free Lance-Star
Fredericksburg, Virginia

Gary Holm

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA,
FORMERLY OF BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

I was in the Pentagon on 9/11. My co-worker, Col. Dave Scales, was killed and my office was destroyed. I had just moved from Bismarck the year before after having been a candidate for N.D. state treasurer, state labor commissioner and state auditor in the '90s. As far as I know, I was the only North Dakotan in the part of the Pentagon that was hit on 9/11. Lt. General Jerry Sinn of Minot, who had an office down the hall from me, was away on a trip.

That day I was sitting at my desk when I heard a "kaboom," felt a gust of wind and everything shook. Someone yelled, "We've been hit," and people started yelling and screaming. In shock, I got up and headed for the door. My co-workers yelled at me to come the other way. The direction I was heading was toward the fire where the plane had come in. Some of my co-workers were trying to get an emergency door open so we could get out. They couldn't get the door open and we thought we were trapped. We finally got the door open and made our way outside the building to see billows of thick, black smoke. We then went out into the parking lot and into what was a surreal scene as we watched the Pentagon burn.

The Bismarck Tribune
Bismarck, North Dakota



JOHN MINCHILLO, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mourners place flowers and pictures in the name cut-out of Kyung Hee (Casey) Cho at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum on Sept. 11, 2020, in New York. Americans commemorated 9/11 as a new national crisis — the coronavirus pandemic — swept the country.

Gerry Hince

U.S. ARMY, RETIRED, BRYAN, TEXAS

I retired from the Pentagon on June 1, 2001, after 31 years in the Army.

My post-retirement job was as the manager of an ice-skating rink in northern Virginia. The morning of Sept. 11, I had an employee come running in to say we all needed to be in the lobby watching the television: the nation was being attacked.

Our rink family sat, prayed, talked and prayed some more that day and that month. The business owners made the decision to use the rink as a gathering place for children and their families trying to find positive activities to keep spirits up, and it worked.

Both of my sons were at Texas A&M University. The older was in his fifth year en route to an Air Force intelligence career, and the youngest was in the Corps of Cadets. Both were safe, and Aggies took care of Aggies once again.

I believe that day in September provided incentive for my sons to commit to careers serving our nation. Both have served in the Middle East.

Sept. 11 brought our nation together and, in its tragedy, patriotism came alive. It is a day to be remembered, and memorial ceremonies remind us of our losses.

Like Memorial Day, Sept. 11 is not a celebration, but rather, time to be thankful for our great nation and to remember those who lost their lives.

God bless America ... on Sept. 11 and every day!

The Eagle
Bryan-College Station, Texas

Susan Shope

EDEN, NORTH CAROLINA

It was a beautiful morning. The sky was clear blue. The air felt like fall. We had flown to New York on Monday 9/10.

It was our regular September buying trip for a major retailer. We were eating breakfast and discussing business, when one of the servers came to our table and quietly said, we just heard on the radio that something terrible is happening. A plane has flown into the World Trade Center. We were moved down to a lower floor for our safety. We heard sirens, sirens and more sirens.

Finally at 6 p.m. everyone thought it would be safe to go back to the Novotel.

What was outside was apocalyptic. There was a thick coating of dust, debris, and paper blowing up Broadway. We were the only people on the street, no cabs, no other people, nothing.

We locked arms moving as one up the street terrified.

Somehow, someway the next morning, the company got two buses into the city to take us home.

One week later I was back on a plane to complete my orders. Myself, the designer buyer and two other people were the only ones on the plane. We flew into an armed state at LaGuardia. Military guards everywhere. Guns, bomb sniffing dogs and riot gear.

This trip was even more heartbreaking. People were handing out flyers of their missing loved ones. They covered fences, telephone poles, and on T-shirts ... faces everywhere.

All those lives lost on that fateful day in September.

News & Record
Greensboro, North Carolina

Jim Chin

JENKS, OKLAHOMA

On 9/11, I was in my office on the 47th floor of the Citicorp building, which faced down Lexington Avenue in NYC, holding a meeting. The view of the World Trade Center was clear when the first plane hit. As we looked out the window, I said, "New York firefighters are the best in the world and will have that out quickly."

Ten minutes later the other tower exploded in a massive fireball from the second plane. We realized it was an attack and decided to evacuate our building, a noticeable target. As I walked to get my car, the first building fell. Later I was relieved to see two Air Force jets heading to the city. The air in the city stayed poor for many days, and my team and I returned to work the next day so that terrorists would not deter us from doing our jobs as financial advisers and wealth managers. We called all our clients. Unbelievable, terrible experience for all America.

Tulsa World
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Pamala Rush

CASPER, WYOMING

I was sleeping when it happened. I had worked the swing shift in master control at KFNB-TV the night before, getting off at 1. Now I was awakened by my mother screaming down the stairs like I had never heard her sound before.

"The World Trade Center has been attacked!"

To my sleep-filled brain, it sounded like, "The World is ending!"

I woke like a shot and ran up the stairs to find out exactly what my mom had been talking about. For all I knew, I was still dreaming because there on our TV screen was a nightmare.

One plane after another crashed on that warm September morning. Everyone was assaulted with it as the special report was on every channel. Where most could escape the coverage at work, I couldn't. Playing the coverage was my work.

I had nothing to do at work. There were no shows to record since some had been sent via antennae on the north tower. There were no commercials with nonstop coverage of the attack. All I could do was watch.

In watching, I almost felt I was there. That day, the most important thing I could do was be there.

I sat at a counter in front of screens that played a national nightmare. I was there so that everyone watching could be there, too. We sent firefighters, food and blood. We sent boots for the search dogs. And we sent our prayers.

I have never stepped foot at the World Trade Center or the Pentagon, but that day, I was there.

Casper Star-Tribune
Casper, Wyoming

Laurie Moriarty

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

I was teaching fifth-grade science at the King Science Magnet Center. My open period had just begun and I walked across the hall to the media center where my team would have our weekly meeting. As I walked in I saw many teachers standing in silence looking at our big screen. I looked and saw the first tower shortly after it had been hit. Black smoke billowing.

All of us were in shock and disbelief. Our principal asked us to not turn on our TVs but some did so throughout the day as each new group of students came to class, some had heard about it and some hadn't. It was so hard to discuss it with 10-year-olds but I did it. Especially difficult as I did not know details and didn't want to speculate. They already had lots of theories.

I got through the day. Walking to my car a teacher pointed out no vapor trails in the gorgeous September sky as all flights had been halted.

I had stood on top of the first tower that was hit a few months before while on my 60th birthday trip with my daughters.

We must never forget. I won't.

The World-Herald
Omaha, Nebraska

Deborah Wolf

CORVALLIS, OREGON

My husband and I lived near Washington Square in New York City. I was on my way to vote when I saw people standing looking downtown where the first tower had just been hit by a plane. Thinking it must be a horrible accident, I continued on. By the time I was finished, I watched as another plane crashed into the second tower. "We are at war!" I thought. "But with who?"

By then ash-covered groups of workers were walking uptown — a kind shop owner had given out free running shoes. We were either glued to the news or going outside and watching the towers slowly burn. It was terrifying and unreal. No one really knew what happened or if they would strike again.

So many were killed that day. Posters sprang up with pictures of loved ones in the hope that they were wandering around dazed. Everyone wanted to help. My husband stood in line to donate blood but there was no one to receive it. The hospital later discarded the blood.

We were very kind to each other. Life was fragile. Anyone could have lost someone.

Corvallis Gazette-Times
Corvallis, Oregon

Wanda K. Hunter

CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA

I was employed at the Navy Supply Information Systems at Mechanicsburg on the morning of 9/11. Being one of several employees attending training, we were informed by the instructor that we must return to our individual offices. The commanding officer then informed us that the post was under lockdown.

Living in Carlisle and working in Mechanicsburg, my thoughts went to the safety of my family and friends in Carlisle.

All televisions were tuned in on the attack, showing it repeatedly. Each showing brought additional anxiety and sadness along with questions. WHY? WHO? Those sentiments were felt throughout the office.

Then came the second attack — the Pentagon. My son was an officer in the United States Army assigned to Fort Meade. There were occasions when his job required him to work at the Pentagon. When I saw the second attack, my heart was now in my throat.

My daughter-in-law finally answered the phone after many attempts. She informed me that he did not go to the Pentagon that day and was at his office at Fort Meade. I was thankful that he was at Fort Meade, but that did not lessen my anxiety or grief for all the families who had to deal with casualties.

This attack made me aware of how quickly situations can alter our lives. It gave me more compassion, concern and understanding of our first responders and the military and how important it is to stay connected to our families.

The Sentinel
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Ana Canales

TEACHER FROM ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA

I arrived at St. Helena Primary School in shock. Our principal called us together and advised that we give no additional information, but just listen to kids' questions and answer directly. Good advice, but it didn't prepare me for the next hour.

I was scared, parents were scared, children were scared. Adults were crying; children, ages 5 through 7, were clinging; everyone looking for answers as they arrived in Room 10. We sat on the rug. I realized my immediate task was to keep everyone calm and lessen the gut-wrenching fear we were all feeling. The horrifying tragedy was beyond anything we had experienced in our lifetimes.

This was deep-breath time. Some kids knew America had been attacked and they were so frightened — it was up to me to assure them that planes were not coming to our school to dive into us, that our families were not being attacked, that they would not be killed, that they were safe with their parents and at school.

We talked until the children were done. We sang our song, "We All Soar Like Eagles," we hugged, the kids went to snack and recess. I realized I had just bonded with a group of people that I will forever hold in my heart. These young people are in their 20s; I hope that what we did that morning together — when we weren't sure of the future of America — serves us all as we continue to face a world of uncertainty.

Napa Valley Register
Napa, California

Brian Daake

BEATRICE, NEBRASKA

Sept. 11, 2001, is a day, like others in history, where you remember what you were doing and where you were when the events unfolded. I was a firefighter on B Shift at that time and this was our duty day.

When the first tower was hit, I was doing my assigned house duties, which included cleaning the exercise room. I remember Doug Van Winkle came in and told me that one of the twin towers was hit by an airplane. While planes don't normally crash into buildings, it does happen and I finished my task.

As I made my way out to the apparatus bay the rest of the on-duty crew were in front of the television watching the events unfold in New York City. Together we watched the south tower get struck. At that moment we knew that life would be forever changed.

We continued to watch in horror as the day's events unfolded, while still going about our daily business of helping the citizens of Beatrice and Gage County.

As I reflect over the last 20 years, much has changed. In the world of public safety, we have not forgotten that members of the New York City Fire Department, Police Department and Port Authority did everything in their power to save as many lives as possible that day. We lost 343 firefighters, 60 police officers and eight EMTs or paramedics. We honor their sacrifice and hope that when we are faced with our moment to do the right thing that we will as well.

Beatrice Daily Sun
Beatrice, Nebraska

Joanne Padley

TONAWANDA, NEW YORK

What I remember most about Sept. 11 is the sound of silence afterward. I lived in a busy flight pattern area and the sound of planes flying overhead was a part of our everyday lives. The absence of that sound after flights were all grounded seemed deafening in our sleepy little hamlet called Lake in the Hills, located outside Chicago, which has one of the busiest airports in the country. In addition, when flights resumed and we were able to travel by air once again, I remember the uneasiness of flying, the feelings of fear and suspicion of my fellow passengers, and the great relief of landing without incident, all feelings never felt before in my life, yet still lingering today. For me, Sept. 11 signifies the death of innocence and life as we all knew it.

The Buffalo News
Buffalo, New York



RICH PEDRONCELLI, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rita Mariano and her daughter, Emily, 7, visit a memorial erected in honor of the 17th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2018, in West Sacramento, Calif.

Makenzie Barry (Brookhouser)

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

At 7 years old, my morning began like any other — rushed Pop Tarts, backpacks and shoes. Then, just before being ushered out the door, came a sense of urgency.

The TV flicked on at home and phone calls were exchanged. I couldn't comprehend the magnitude of what was happening or that this moment would change life as I knew it.

The mood at school was somber that day, with teachers whispering and confused looks from my peers as we watched the news. For many, their family lives went on as usual. For mine, the story was different.

Before we knew it, my dad was being deployed as his Air National Guard unit was activated for duty. What followed were months of missed birthdays and holidays, tearful phone calls and an empty feeling in our home. While our dad was away overseas, my mom was here on the homefront, looking after three young children while working a full-time job — a familiar story for many.

Although we felt angry and sad at times, we knew our dad was making a sacrifice in honor of our country and freedoms. Greeting him at the airport upon his return is one of my most cherished memories, a memory I am lucky to have.

Lincoln Journal Star
Lincoln, Nebraska

Bill Connor

RETIRED U.S. ARMY COLONEL,
ORANGEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA

I was an Infantry captain stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, on Sept 11, 2001, having served in the Army for just over a decade with three deployments to the Middle East. I vividly remember a fellow captain telling me about a plane hitting the World Trade Center, and then watching in real time when the second plane hit.

The world changed for America in that moment as the second plane made clear this was no accident. That night, after the Pentagon was hit, Flight 93 went down, and the trade center towers collapsed (with initial estimates of tens of thousands dead).

I will never forget Democrats and Republicans in Congress holding each other and singing "God Bless America." I will never forget the nation turning to God for protection and strength following Sept. 11. I had never seen America more united and religious. America was firmly behind Operation Enduring Freedom to oust the Taliban and al-Qaida from power in Afghanistan.

I proudly volunteered to serve in Afghanistan a few years later. I will never regret that service, and all who served should be proud.

In the years after Sept. 11, 2001, I came to a much stronger faith in God, but I am disturbed by much of America seeming to have turned away from God since the attacks. The unity and commitment to America and American values is so lacking. I can't imagine Congress singing "God Bless America" together. I believe we need to regain our national unity and faith in reflecting on 9/11.

The Times and Democrat
Orangeburg, South Carolina

Matthew Cowen

SONAR TECHNICIAN (SURFACE) PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS (SHIP'S WRITER), U.S. NAVY (1995-2005)
UNION SPRINGS, NEW YORK

On the morning of Sept. 11, I was onboard the USS The Sullivans (DDG-68) as it was getting underway from Naval Station Mayport. During the sea and anchor detail, I sat on the Antisubmarine Warfare Combat System console located in the Combat Information Center. Normally this entailed sitting by as we made our way to sea. This day was quite different. I had access to the tactical chat with other ships in the area and it began buzzing with news. Soon after I heard the 1MC (general announcement system) in the ship call for the captain to go to CIC. It took a moment to understand that we went from a peacetime underway to combat ready in a matter of minutes as the launch keys were activated for the vertical launch system. We spent the next several days patrolling the coast ready to intercept and shoot down any unauthorized aircraft.

I will never forget the speed in which the entire ship went from a "routine" underway to combat ready.

I will also never forget watching what unfolded on the ship TV system.

The Citizen
Auburn, New York

Kathleen Molinos

KELSO, WASHINGTON

What a horrific day! Living and working for a federal entity in northern Virginia on 9/11 caused a lot of angst among co-workers and myself.

At 8:45 a.m. (EDT) I stopped for gas on my way to work, listening to the radio, when the DJ said an airplane had crashed into one of the towers in New York City. I went on to work and told some of my co-workers who immediately turned on the TV.

Wow, another plane had crashed into the other tower and yet another crashed into the Pentagon where one of my co-worker's husband worked. (She was frantic to find out if her husband was OK.)

Not knowing what would happen next, federal employees were sent home; this caused a backup of traffic trying to get out of Washington, D.C., that lasted for hours.

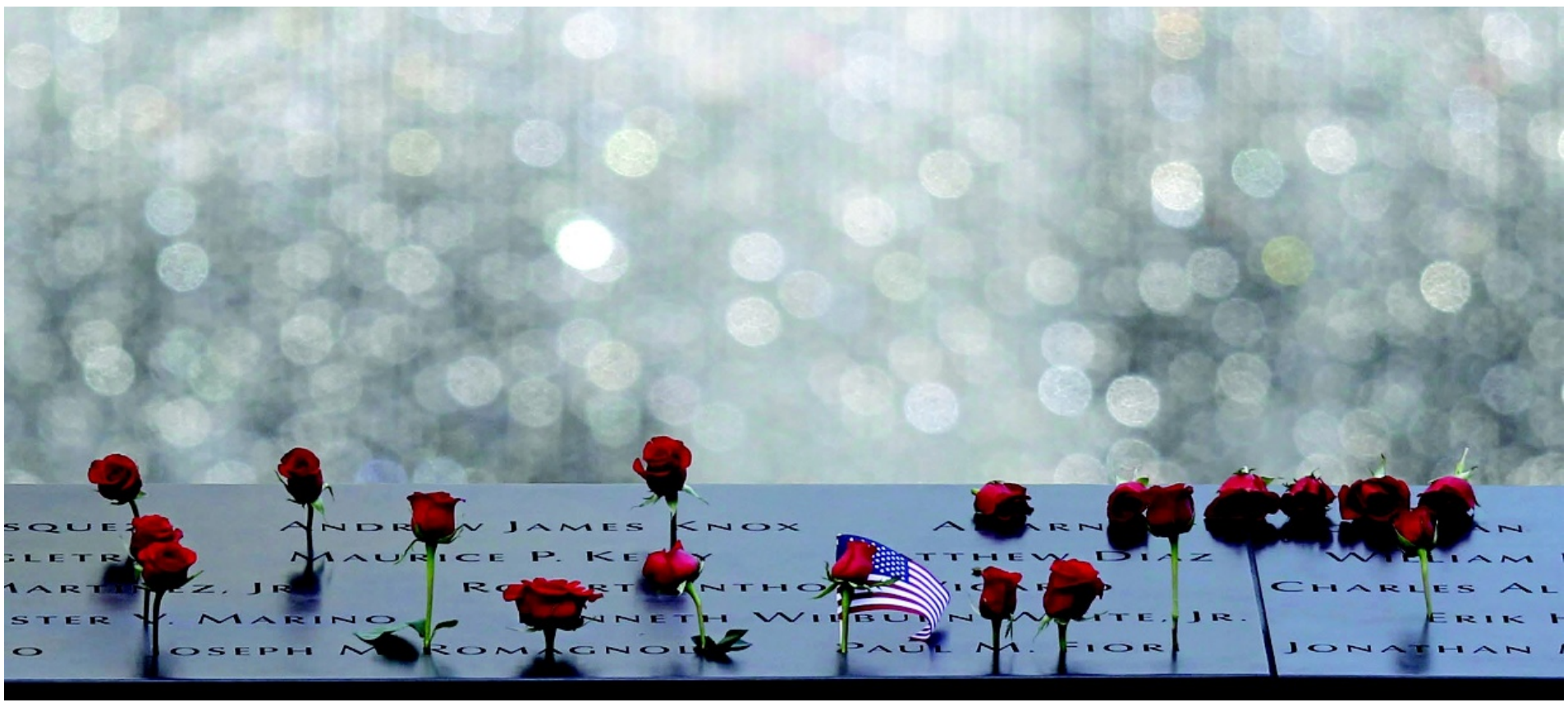
The noise was incredible, going on 24/7 for weeks. I couldn't step out of my house in the usually quiet Virginia suburb without hearing the military planes that were circling the Northern Virginia/D.C. area.

We later learned a couple of our co-workers, who had been in meetings in New York, had perished in the disaster.

To this day, Sept. 11 memories bring back knots in my stomach thinking about the unknown of that day and whether our building would be the next to be demolished. It was like being in a war with the unknown.

As an original Kelsonian, it's good to be back home.

The Daily News
Longview, Washington



JASON DECROW, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Roses and a flag left by mourners adorn the names of 9/11 victims marking the anniversary of the attacks Sept. 11, 2012, at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center site in New York.

Bobby Hamil

HEADLAND, ALABAMA

I am a retired FBI agent, spending 25 years with the bureau. One of the most memorable career events occurred on Sept. 11, 2001.

Just before 9 a.m., we were interrupted and told to turn on the TV — the first plane had hit the twin towers. While stunned and wondering if it was a tragic accident or not, we saw the second plane hit. Our day and the days ahead were about to take on an unprecedented focus.

Recording and running fingerprints were one of the FBI's CJIS Division's (our assignment) primary responsibilities. We were tasked with assembling and deploying teams of analysts to the three disaster sites to assist in processing fingerprints of the victims.

En route to the Pentagon, we were notified that all victims were being transported to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. When we arrived at Dover, the first body bags were being unloaded, ever so delicately.

It would have been a real emotional event, were everyone not so focused on the work to be done. Thinking back, it still causes stomach pains. The work was challenging in the efforts to identify from even the most unrecognizable remains.

One memorable event: while working with a technician, he removed a college class ring from a victim and asked if I had any idea of the victim's age. It was a University of Texas class ring, dated 1975, the same year I graduated college. I still shudder thinking of that moment.

The last act performed was to drape each casket with an American flag before transport. The entire process was probably the most impressive display of national patriotism I've ever witnessed. I'm getting teary-eyed just typing and it happened 20 years ago.

Dothan Eagle
Dothan, Alabama

Karen Umbaugh

MISSOULA, MONTANA

On Sept. 11, my husband and I were driving to work. We were delivering our daughters to school and day care before starting our day as Sentinel High School teachers. Our oldest was 7, and our youngest was 3 and newly adopted from China. We were listening to Craig and Al on Z100 when they broke the news. We were shocked, incredulous and devastated.

My dad's birthday is Sept. 11. I am sorry he has to share his birthday with this horrible day. I beg people to resist being divisive and angry because that is why we endured 9/11. Let's work together for the common good. We have many problems to solve, and we will only overcome these problems if we bring out the best in each other.

The Missoulian
Missoula, Montana

Christie Schmitt Coombs

TUCSON, ARIZONA

For the vast majority of Tucsonans, 9/11 was a tragic event that happened 3,000 miles away. For my family, it was more than a national tragedy. As it turns out, it was a personal heartbreak, a living nightmare.

I grew up in Yuma and studied journalism at the University of Arizona where I met a tall, funny, kind and goofy Bostonian named Jeff Coombs. After he graduated in 1981 and I in 1982, we moved to Massachusetts where the jobs were and got married two years later.

The morning of 9/11, Jeff boarded American Airlines Flight 11 bound for Los Angeles for a conference. It was four days before my 41st birthday and a week before his 43rd. Like so many across the world, I watched in absolute disbelief as my husband's plane crashed into the World Trade Center. Panicked, I called my family, most of them in Yuma, Phoenix and Tucson. Then I had the most difficult task I've ever faced — telling our three children who were 7, 11 and 13 that "some really bad men crashed daddy's plane into a building and now he's not coming home." At that moment we knew life would never be the same.

Kind and generous people offered condolences, gifts, money for the kids' college funds, food and so much support. To pay it forward, we created a foundation in his memory, and that has helped us heal over the last 20 years.

Arizona Daily Star
Tucson, Arizona



ROBERT F. BUKATY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

An American flag is draped over a firefighter's helmet Sept. 15, 2001, just days after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City.

Paul Ranum

WEST SALEM, WISCONSIN

Watching the morning news in Grand Marais, Minnesota, I could not imagine the devastation which was occurring in New York City. But I didn't have to imagine it for long. The next week I was experiencing ground zero first hand as a volunteer stress counselor with the American Red Cross. I received my formal training from the La Crosse Red Cross Chapter.

Words and pictures could not begin to describe the scene. The pollution from the ashes covering everything on the ground and in the air as well as the debris all over was indescribable. Ground zero was a horrific sight! It was an emotional experience working with the exhausted firefighters, police, first responders and medical personnel. I also spent many hours with residents who lost their apartments and possessions. The most difficult part of my job was listening to those survivors whose loved ones jumped to their deaths or were crushed in the collapsed buildings.

As a well-trained and experienced volunteer having been at more than 20 national disasters, I ended up supervising 40 mental health workers from across America. Ground zero was a crime scene, so all of us who worked on or close to the pile had to wear special badges and identification. It would be very difficult after 20 years for me to pick out any one of many experiences or stories.

After spending a month in lower Manhattan I was ready to return home. Before I left, Mayor Rudy Giuliani gave me a large American flag which I fly often to remind me of my time on ground zero.

La Crosse Tribune
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Marilee Hedberg

LA CRESCENT, MINNESOTA

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was visiting staff at Sagebrush Corporation's library services and book rebinding plant in Topeka, Kansas. The workday was just beginning when an announcement came over the speakers; we rushed for the breakroom television. What followed was an eerily quiet week and long, contemplative rental car drive home (no planes were flying). While our family suffered no direct losses, the impact of that event would take on greater meaning later in my career.

Following the divestiture of Sagebrush's various companies, I joined another education technology company — nonprofit Scholarship America. Scholarship America administers the Families of Freedom Fund scholarships established by Bob Dole and Bill Clinton in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. I led the search for the executive director of Families of Freedom in New York City — and have since been inspired by the impact this and so many other scholarships have had on the lives of young people around the world.

The eligible pool of applicants for this scholarship has grown exponentially over the years from 3,800 (through the arduous identification of victims' remains at the site) to nearly 7,000 (as the pool expanded to include the families of those who were lost to, or permanently disabled by, a growing list of disease and terminal illness).

As we remember those who were lost that day, I invite you to join me in the effort to raise funds for Families of Freedom scholarships by participating in the virtual 9.11 Mile Memorial Challenge, presented by Medal Dash. The event closes on Sept. 30 and $10 from every registration fee goes to support Families of Freedom. You can learn more at 911.medaldash.com.

NEVER FORGET.

Winona Daily News
Winona, Minnesota

Deborah L. Hopla

FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Walking out of a patient's room in Timmonsville, South Carolina, I was summoned to the phone. My husband said, "Have you seen the news? America is under attack?"

Quickly the people in the clinic turned on the TV in the waiting room to see the towers falling. Shortly, the Pentagon underwent another catastrophic attack.

Standing there in disbelief were the medical staff and the patients, and all were silent. Tears were rolling down each face as the impact of what had just happened struck us all. The physical ailments and demands of the day took a backseat as we wondered when and where the next attack would happen.

As most people, I took freedom and peace in our land for granted. That night I hugged my family tighter as our homes filled with the news and the events of the day. Forever etched in our minds were the towers coming down, the people running away and toward the events. The president being given the news as he read to school-age children.

Life in America changed that day. A new sense of what having freedom meant and how quickly it could be removed. The feeling of "One Nation under God!" became our anthem again. It no longer mattered your political affiliation, color, gender or nationality. We were all Americans.

In remembering what happened that day, America is once again under attack. Not by a terrorist flying a plane but by a deadly virus. We need to remember that to truly be free we must come together. Together we make America stronger. Together we stand united. Together we can overcome any adversary. Together we are a free America.

Florence Morning News
Florence, South Carolina

Teresa M. Nors

WEST, TEXAS

Like the song says, I was that teacher in a classroom full of students. I was only a student teacher and was assigned to La Vega High School. My mentor teacher, Coach George Kilgo, was beginning our U.S. History class when the English teacher ran in to our room and said one of the towers from the World Trade Center had been hit. A little bit later, she came back in and said the other tower had been hit and Coach Kilgo said, "We are under siege."

After that, we spent the day listening to the radio with the students, watching the actual falling of the towers on our school TV and answering the students' questions as well as we could. I remember one student asking what the World Trade Center really was. Other students thought we would be hit as several places around the United States had been hit. We calmly had to explain that Waco, Texas, was probably not high on a terrorists' hit list but that Fort Hood was a definite possibility.

La Vega High School was particularly interested in all of this as the son of the school librarian was employed as a chef at the World Trade Center and he couldn't be reached. About 2:30, the principal of the school came on the loudspeaker and said that the son had called his mom and assured her he was fine as he happened to be off work that day. The whole school cheered. Later that semester, as we were studying yellow journalism, recruitment and propaganda, students began talking about 9/11 again since it was foremost in their minds. I had them make patriotism recruitment posters. This was some of the best student work I have ever seen. One student with a particularly creative poster noted on the back of his creation that he was thankful for the assignment as it helped him deal with his feelings about the whole situation. I think that was the general feeling of all the classes.

Now, I am teaching a generation of students who weren't even born yet. I try to remind myself of that around 9/11. I started to devote a day to video clips and discussion of the siege.

Last year, after a particularly sad clip of final calls from victims to families, one of my students said out loud, "Oh wow! Now I get it." I hope he always does "get it".

Waco Tribune-Herald
Waco, Texas

SSG Steven Howell

RET. 4249TH MP, MASON CITY, IOWA

The morning of 9/11, I was getting satellite TV hooked up. I had to run to Radio Shack to get a part for them to complete the connection. En route, I heard on the radio of the first plane hitting one of the towers. I rushed home and gave the techs the part and told them to get it up and running right away.

That done, we saw the second jet hit the other tower. I cursed and immediately started going over the plans I had trained for over the last 15-years-plus for going to war. I started packing my gear.

About 11:30 a.m., I got my first warning order to go to war, the Pentagon and Shanksville strikes occurred. I notified my employer, who told me it was just a terrorist strike; I replied that somebody just declared war on us and that they would have federal orders by the end of the day, and they did.

I told my wife what she needed to know in my absence. I had to report to my unit the morning of the 12th, be processed for war, not knowing where we were going or for how long or even if I would come back.

I called my two children, told them I would be going to war, to donate blood, and that I loved them. My wife was granted permission to say goodbye at the end of the day on the 12th as my people would be shipping out the morning of the 13th. I returned two years later.

Globe Gazette
Mason City, Iowa

Judith Scott

BOTETOURT COUNTY, VIRGINIA

My office was on the 104th floor of the south tower. On 9/11, I had a doctor's appointment in New Jersey and saw the north tower get hit on TV. I called my co-workers who said they thought a small plane had crashed into the building. When I got to the doctor's office, a man rushed in and said that the south tower had been hit. Knowing my co-workers had not left the building, I literally collapsed on the floor.

I came home and learned that 17 people had escaped the building. Cell service was spotty but I was able to contact some of them who had taken refuge in a church. Those who lived in New Jersey walked uptown to my fiance's apartment, and he drove them out to my house where I had called their families to come and meet them. It was a very bittersweet moment.

Days later, those of us who survived (most were away on business trips or had not arrived at the office as of yet) went about rebuilding our firm. On the wall was a sign-up sheet for attendance at memorial services (not funerals).

Most of those we lost were young and thus there were 123 children (most under 5) who had lost a parent. Our firm started a foundation and many clients and friends donated generously. That foundation has put every one of those children through college.

As I write these words I am crying. After 20 years, the sadness remains.

The Roanoke Times
Roanoke, Virginia

Carla Graham

TWIN FALLS, IDAHO

It's hard to believe it's been 20 years, as I vividly remember the events of that day. I was there, right across the river from where it happened! My boss came in and told us that his dad had just seen a broadcast of a plane hitting the World Trade Center. My first thought was about the pilot in the small plane. Then we learned it was a huge plane carrying lots of people, and I was concerned for their families. Then my boss came in and said, "Carla, we are under attack."

When the Trade Centers went down, we lost our telephone service. It was eerily quiet except for the wailing of the sirens. Usually in New Jersey, there is always the droning of planes overhead. I was the bookkeeper, and I still had a computer to work on, so I continued working, trying to blot out the evil that was going on. Then my phone rang! It was my daughter calling from Idaho to check on me. As soon as I heard her voice, I broke down crying. Only God could have put that call through, and I am eternally grateful. We closed so the employees could be home with their families, not knowing what the rest of the day would bring. For the next two weeks, every time I heard a siren, I was terrified it was starting again. To watch the drama unfold as the job of rescue and recovery went on, I could only pray for the families whose lives were torn apart.

Times-News
Twin Falls, Idaho

Lynette Tedlund

BILLINGS, MONTANA

How has 9/11 changed me? My mom and I traveled by plane out of state for the funeral of her beloved young godson, only nine months after 9/11. I whisked through airport security in only a few moments. But mother, who was confined to a wheelchair due to her multiple sclerosis, was held aside for an hour and a half for thorough inspection. They rolled up both of her pant legs, exposing her catheter tube which led to her urine bag. They took off her coat, they rolled up her sleeves, and they inspected every nook and cranny of her electric wheelchair.

I was appalled. I was angry. My mother was the sweetest person who would never hurt anyone. Yet, in my mind they were treating her like a criminal. When the hour and a half was over, I turned to my mother and said something like, "How dare they spend 1½ hours on you, when you are the furthest thing from a criminal." She just sweetly smiled and said, "You know, someone could have planted something on my chair. I don't mind."

What have I learned from 9/11? I've learned more patience and forbearance from my precious mother.

The Billings Gazette
Billings, Montana



BEBETO MATTHEWS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Perimeter box columns from the World Trade Center were installed in the National September 11 Memorial & Museum with a view toward the new 1 World Trade Center in New York. The columns, recovered from the World Trade Center site after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, were part of the north tower. After years of delays due to funding disputes, engineering challenges and a nearly disastrous flood, the museum opened to the public on May 21, 2014.

Staff reports

DAVENPORT, IOWA

Davenport Mayor Mike Matson deployed to Qatar and Afghanistan in early 2002 for several months to assist in advising joint special operations missions. He retired from the Army in 2003.

"(On the morning of 9/11) I was the operations sergeant major at Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C. … A few days before, a few other senior folks and I went down to Fort Benning, Ga. … because there were units going through mobilization … (headed) to Bosnia and Kosovo. So I was there to kind of see and report on how that preparation for those units were.

"So that morning of 9/11, we're in a classroom. … One of my friends, another sergeant major that was with me, came in and said, 'Mike! Come in here. A plane just flew into the World Trade Center.' What?! So I kind of pause, and the training paused. In that room, there wasn't a TV so we went into another bigger room, and there was a TV with a live (news) feed.

"… It showed the first tower (and) smoke coming out of it, because the (first) plane had hit. … As we're sitting there talking about what the heck we think happened … we watch the other plane hit the next tower.

"All of us said almost at the exact time, 'We're at war with someone.' This is not an accident. Two planes are not accidentally flying into the two towers. … Five, 10, 15, 20 minutes go (by) and people's beepers start going off. And mine and others … are like, 'Get back to (Fort) Bragg, now.'

"So everybody realized we're being attacked."

Quad-City Times
Davenport, Iowa

Patricia L. Buls

HUDSON, IOWA

In a single month in August 2001 I was diagnosed with breast cancer, had a mastectomy and the first round of chemo. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed and just trying to make it through each day at Allen College where I was assistant professor in the nursing program. On Sept. 11, at 1:30 p.m., I had finished the clinical with my students and was emotionally and physically exhausted. I walked into the breakroom and couldn't believe what I saw on TV as the horror unfolded. It was like a terrible nightmare and I kept saying, "this cannot be real." When I could finally grasp some of the horror, I remember saying to myself, "God, please get me through this cancer. These people and their families are going to need a lot of prayers to get through this awfulness. I can pray for them."

Today, 20 years later, I am alive and healthy. And yes, I continue to pray for all those folks who lost their lives that day, and their loved ones. Having the cancer I have learned to appreciate each day and be thankful for what I have. Maybe that is the good we can take from all the ugliness of 9/11 — to appreciate our freedom and never forget the immense sacrifice these brave folks made for us. God bless and love them. They all are heroes in the truest sense of the word.

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier
Waterloo, Iowa

Rev. Paul Masters

NEW HORIZON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

I was serving my first church, Fairfield Presbyterian Church in Fairfield, Washington.

I was driving back from taking the kids to an early morning marching band practice at the local high school. It was about 6:30 a.m. when my cellphone rang. "Paul, turn on the TV!" When I got home, I turned on the TV and saw the replay of the planes hitting both of the twin towers.

The images were stunning, shocking, beyond anyone's wildest expectations. Between the (news radio) descriptions and the images on TV, I experienced a sense of immediacy, as if this were happening 30 miles away, instead of 3,000 miles away. I was glued to the TV for what seemed hours.

I soon realized that there needed to be an avenue for people to express their anger, fear and patriotism. I bought the last American flag from the local hardware store and hung it from the bell tower on the church campus. I organized a special midweek service to give people the opportunity to gather to support one another. Along with my ecumenical colleagues, I participated in a community worship service to bring people together.

As I look back, what is striking about 9/11 is that our communities came together for mutual support. Gone were the traditional rivalries — we looked past divisions in order to see commonalities and found that those divisions were artificial.

Somehow, we unlearned that lesson in the past 20 years. It is my hope that we relearn that lesson.

The Daily Nonpareil
Council Bluffs, Iowa

David Solomon

COMMANDER, AMERICAN LEGION POST 10; MILLERSBURG, OREGON

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, I received a call from the 911 dispatcher that a plane had hit the north tower of the World Trade Center and they were calling for an all-hands. We came in from Queens, New York, on our ambulance FH2 at 8:46 a.m.

While on our way through the Manhattan traffic at 9:03 a.m., a second plane hit the south tower, and we knew it was a terrorist attack. The rest of our crews commandeered a New York City bus and came in with extra equipment. Upon arrival there were people screaming and running and bloody. We went to the north tower and began helping and caring for people as the other ambulances arrived and a staging area was being set up. People were jumping from the top of the buildings so as not to be burned up.

At 9:59 a.m., the south tower collapsed and it looked like an atomic bomb hit it with smoke, cement, metal, bodies coming down as we ran for cover. The north tower fell at 10:28. It took what seemed like a month for all the soot and asbestos to settle on the ground before we could run back in there to help survivors.

People who were white, black, yellow were all one color — "gray." My wife Linda didn't know where I was for the next three days. I found out she was with people holding vigils in the parks. I lived the nightmare for the next three months looking for survivors so families could get closure.

Albany Democrat-Herald
Albany, Oregon



HIRO KOMAE, ASSOCIATED PRESS (SEPT. 11, 2016)

FOREVER CHANGED BY TRAGEDY

Tribute in Light is a commemorative public art installation created in remembrance of the terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York on Sept. 11, 2001. Reaching up to four miles into the sky, the twin beams mimic the shape of the towers – a powerful symbol that memorializes those who died and recognizes the city that survives.