



Opening Argument



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Thoughts and Reflections: September 11th

It is difficult to believe that it has been a year since the tragic events of last September 11th. The memories are so strong and so real that it seems to have happened only yesterday.

All of us knew people who lost their lives on September 11th. Some were friends or colleagues who we had known for years. Others were individuals who we came to know only after their deaths as we read about them or shared the pain of their loss with their families at countless funerals and memorial services. Learning about them and their lives and about those whom they left behind brought tears to our eyes. Each had hopes and dreams. Each had talents and gifts. Each loved and were loved. Each touched the lives of so many others in ways that we had never quite realized before. The events of September 11th reminded us of our humanity -

- the fragility of our lives, how much we have in common with our neighbors and how much we need and depend on each other. It brought out the best in us as we opened our hearts in gestures of support and assistance. It reinforced for us in the most profound way that we truly are all one family and one people -- that we are all hurt when one of us is hurt and that we must all rejoice for each precious life that exists.

Special Recognition

As we try now to go on with our lives, it is only fitting that we pause today to remember all those who lost their lives on that fateful day. We salute them and extend

to their families our love and our prayers. And we give special recognition to all of those who died while trying to save the lives of others -

- police, firefighters, court officers, emergency service workers, health care workers and others -- all of those who showed courage, bravery, self-sacrifice and an indomitable spirit.

One of the most difficult aspects of dealing with a tragedy such as that which occurred on September 11th is that it makes us feel small and helpless. But the extraordinary example of heroism by those who lost their lives that day -- and others who miraculously survived -- shows us that indeed we are not. Each one of us can touch and help and love and heal others. Each of us can use our lives in positive and constructive ways that make a significant difference for good. The incredible spirit of unity and support created in the weeks after September 11th where people from all over the world contributed so much to help those in need is something that we must strive to retain. It is, in the end, the most appropriate tribute to those who died and the strongest possible statement to those who launched the attack that they failed.

Renewed Sense of Purpose

So let us commit ourselves with a renewed sense of purpose to the task of rebuilding -- and offering a helping hand to those who need it. In so doing we will emerge from the tragic events of a year ago stronger and better than we have ever been.