

Annual Speech by Gramercy Park Block Association
President Arlene Harrison
World Trade Center Remembrance

On September 11, 2001, our world and our lives were changed forever.

On that day ordinary citizens took extraordinary steps to help their fellow man and in doing so many gave up their own lives.

Thousands lost their lives at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon in Washington, and in a field in Pennsylvania.

The year that followed was a year of great courage, great patriotism, great love and great sorrow.

It was a year of endless funerals, endless memorials, and endless tears.

In our neighborhood it seemed that everyone we talked to had been touched personally by this senseless act of terrorism, either directly or through the loss of a loved one, a friend, a neighbor, a business associate.

On that tragic day 12 of our neighbors went to the World Trade Center and never returned. They were William Biggart, Jim Paul, Jean Marie Collin, Richard Fraser, Jeffrey Smith, Jeffrey Wiener, Steven Jacobson, Janet Gustafson, Alan Lederman, John O'Neill, Arnold Lim, Christopher Hanley, Sean Lugano, and Marta Peterson's 25 year old son Davin.

The most vivid memory of many of our neighbors who worked at the World Trade Center, seemed to be the young faces of the rescue workers who were rushing up the stairs as they themselves fled the buildings. "They saved everyone but themselves" was the headline that soon flashed around the world.

Before September 11th, every day that our public protectors went to work they never knew if they would return home that night.

And on that day, when unimaginable death and destruction fell from the clear blue skies, many of our local public protectors answered their final call.

Just a block away from here on 21st Street at the 13th Precinct and Emergency Service Squad 1, we lost police officers Moira Smith, Robert Fazio and Brian McDonnell, on 20th Street at the Police Academy, officer Glen Pettit. On 19th Street at Cabrini Medical Center emergency medical technician David Mark Sullins. A few blocks away we lost transit police officers Mark Ellis and Ramon Suarez.

In the Fire Department companies that directly serve our community, from Ladder Company 3 on 13th Street, the company which participated yearly in our National Night Out Against Crime and who over the years had become our friends, we lost Capt. Patrick Brown, Capt. John Williamson, Lt. Kevin Donnelly and firefighters Michael Carroll, James Coyle, Gerard Dewan, Jeffrey Giordano, Joseph Maloney, John McAvoy, Timothy McSweeney, Joseph Ogren, Steven Olsen.

From Engine 16/Ladder Co. 7 on 29th Street, Capt. Vernon Richard, and firefighters George Cain, Robert Foti, Charles Mendez, Richard Muldowney, Vincent Princiotta.

From Engine 5 on 14th Street, Manuel Delvalle.

From Rescue One, Captain Terry Hatton and from Engine 21, Captain William Burke, Jr.

We also mourn the loss of Firefighter Keith Glascoe, the son of a great friend of our community, Con Edison's Ben Glascoe. Keith and seven of his fellow firefighters from Ladder Co. 21 on 38th Street went down to the World Trade Center that day and none of them returned.

We have gotten to know many of the families of these men and women and all they ever ask is one thing – **THAT WE NEVER FORGET.**

As many of you will remember, after 9/11, for many months the Gramercy Park Block Association organized a round-the-clock community relief effort at

the 13th Precinct. It was made up of area residents, merchants, restaurants and hotels. We prepared and served thousands of meals, provided shelter and distributed critical supplies to police, fire, emergency and other support units.

We also served the Medical Examiner's office, the Coroner's office, and Pier 94 families, and took care of the visiting national guardsmen, and volunteers from around the country who rushed here to assist the workers at Ground Zero.

Among the many projects our Association organized were . . .

- A Prayer Vigil and Candlelight Procession from Calvary Church to The Brotherhood Synagogue.
- Memorial Concerts.
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors Benefits for the families of our local police officers who were lost at the World Trade Center.
- A nationwide "Kids Helping Kids" effort for children to reach out to the children of police officers, who were lost on 9/11.
- A Block Association Video Project in which we recorded memories of their fellow officers who died at The World Trade Center that we gave to their families.
- A two-year project with Housing & Service's Olive Leaf to facilitate health services for World Trade Center uniformed personnel.
- A children's year-round planting of a permanent Remembrance Garden in front of the 13th Precinct.
- A huge homemade banner we hung over the entrance to the 13th Precinct entitled, "They Cannot Dim the Light."
- An installation of an eight-foot permanent photographic exhibit inside the Precinct showing our community's relief effort and support following 9/11 that reads, "NYPD YOU MAKE US PROUD."

We are proud to say that much of the information in our archives describing our community's many World Trade Center projects are housed at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center site.

For months, tens of thousands of children from across the country wrote cards and letters, drew pictures and sent homemade banners of support. We wallpapered every inch of our command center at the 13th Precinct with their messages. They sent cookies and muffins they had baked, and enclosed notes and pictures of love and support.

We were told over and over again that those expressions of love and support that came to our rescue workers from the children around the country was what often brought tears to their eyes and helped them face yet another day of unimaginable devastation and anguish at the site.

We will never forget 9/11 and those horrible months that followed.

We can honor all those who died that day by being the ones that remember.