

9/11 24th Anniversary Remarks

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you all for gathering here today at Troy's September 11th Memorial for our 24th annual ceremony, as we honor the lives lost, the heroes who stepped forward, and the families forever changed by the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

It's hard to believe that twenty-four years have passed. For many of us, the memories of that morning remain as vivid as if it were yesterday - the disbelief as we watched the towers fall, the fear and sorrow that swept across our nation, and the silence that blanketed our communities as we tried to make sense of it all. And for us here in Troy, there is an especially haunting detail - one of the planes that struck the towers actually passed directly over our city on its way to New York. That fact forever ties Troy to that day in a way that is both sobering and deeply personal.

But out of that darkness of that day, we also witnessed something else. We saw courage. We saw unity. We saw the very best of the human spirit emerge in the face of unimaginable tragedy. Firefighters, police officers, EMTs, and everyday citizens - ordinary people who ran toward danger to save others. Thousands of men and women answered the call that day and in the weeks, months, and years that followed. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

Here in Troy, our community felt that day deeply. We lost loved ones, friends, and neighbors. And yet, just as we saw across this country, Troy came together. We comforted one another, we prayed together, and we pledged that we would never forget.

And we also remember the brave members of our very own Troy Fire Department who traveled downstate in the days following the attacks to assist in rescue efforts and the difficult cleanup at Ground Zero. These were men who carried the weight of our city with them as they worked alongside brothers and sisters in uniform from across the nation. Today, we honor them by name:

Ret. Battalion Chief Ray Davis, Ret. Captain Paul Denio, Ret. Captain Gary Favro, Ret. Assistant Chief James Hughes, Ret. Firefighter Dave Judge, Ret. Chief Eric McMahon, Ret. Firefighter Bill Miller, Ret. Captain Rich Moreno, Ret. Firefighter Randy Pascucci, Lieutenant Vincent Sadowski (active), Ret. Captain Conrad Moss, Deputy Chief Tom Adams, Firefighter Mike Murnane, Assistant Chief Mike Kelleher, Captain John Carboni, and Chief Thomas Garrett.

Their courage, their service, and their sacrifice will always be part of Troy's story, and part of the national story of September 11th, 2001.

This memorial, at the corner of 112th and 1st, is more than stone and steel. It is a sacred place that connects Troy to the nation's story. It reminds us that freedom is not free, that service is not without sacrifice, and that love of neighbor is one of the greatest strengths we carry as Americans.

As we reflect today, let us also think about the ways we can honor those we lost - not only with ceremonies and monuments, but with our actions. By volunteering in our neighborhoods, by supporting our first responders and military families, by extending kindness to one another, and by striving each day to build a safer, stronger, and more united Troy.

Twenty-four years later, the wounds may remain, but so does our resilience. And so does our responsibility - to remember, to honor, and to live in a way that carries forward the spirit of unity that defined us on that day and in the days that followed.

To the families who lost loved ones, we hold you in our hearts. To our first responders and veterans, we thank you for your service and sacrifice. And to all gathered here today, may we continue to keep the memory of 9/11 alive - not as a story of destruction, but as a story of courage, compassion, and unbreakable resolve.

May God bless the memories of the fallen, may God bless all of you, and may God continue to bless the City of Troy and the United States of America.

Thank you.