

2011

# Eight Blocks Away: Memoirs of September 11, 2001

New York Law School

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## Recommended Citation

New York Law School, "Eight Blocks Away: Memoirs of September 11, 2001" (2011). *Tribeca Square Press*. Book 3.  
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Eight  
Blocks  
Away

Memoirs of  
September 11, 2001

by the  
New York Law School Community



2011

Note:

The essays collected in this volume are unedited,  
except for minor spelling and punctuation errors.

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Tribeca Square Press, 185 West Broadway New York, NY 10013  
publisher@www.tribecasquarepress.com

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ISBN: 978-0-9793354-6-4

Tribeca Square Press Book No. 8

Title page and divider pages set in Mona Lisa Recut and Mona Lisa Solid.

Text type is Minion Condensed.

Compiled and edited by Jethro K. Lieberman

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## Reflections — Then and Now

Richard A. Matasar

Rereading the reflections in *Eight Blocks Away* has brought back many memories — bad and good. There was confusion, deep depression, worry, fear, anger, and uncertainty. There was also love, dedication, perseverance, sharing, and optimism in the face of challenges. For many, 9/11 was the worst day of their lives, indelibly tattooed as a marker of the loss of innocence. For others it marked a day to plot retaliation, hope for revenge, and strike out at enemies within and without. For most, it brought them to colleagues and friends to share mutual support. It allowed healing of fractured parts of our lives, giving back, reaching out to others, and moving forward with renewed purpose.

Looking back at my own words, I cannot remember writing, but I can remember feeling — sometimes alone, always challenged to act stronger than I felt and more cheerful than I wanted to be — conscious that in bad times, the Dean must be CEO, comforting parent, counselor, strategist, and even clergyman. Before 9/11, I worked at New York Law School. After 9/11, I embraced New York Law School as my home and saw our community as my family. These events remade me and our School.

In the fall of 2001, I met frequently with students who wanted to drop out of law school — some to go home to be with their families, some who wanted to be anywhere but in our neighborhood (or war zone as they called it), some who were fearful, some who saw it as a chance to leverage their way into higher ranked schools, and some who simply could not cope. But when the dust settled, when faculty began teaching again, when “normalcy” returned — so too did our students. Why?

Perhaps it was because this tragedy brought out the best in all of us. It turned our commuter school into a community. It took us away from our selfish pursuits and led us to focus on the needs of others — the legal needs of our neighbors who lost so much, the spiritual needs of those far from home, the intellectual needs of students seeking to understand how to deal with lawlessness, and the simple need to be close to those who comfort us and to provide comfort to those who need us.

My father died of a stroke in October of 2001. I felt I failed to grieve his loss properly because I needed to be at the law school and to be strong for others. Now, some ten years later, I understood that I poured all of my grief into work — redoubling my efforts to make others feel better, making sure that their needs were met, assuring our students, faculty, staff, and graduates that everything would be ok. I realize now that those were qualities I did not know I had — qualities my father gave to me by being the wonderful man he was and the silent and strong leader of his organization. Through our city's tragedy, I implicitly tried to emulate my dad. Perhaps his death passed to me his strength.

Now, ten years later, what of the fears we had? Our country blindly went to multiple wars that continue to this day. Governmental lawyers ran roughshod over the Constitution and liberties built over centuries. But they were rebuked by a Supreme Court made up of strong believers in Executive power, who simply could not condone usurpation of our traditions. We returned to a system of laws. We somehow held off further attacks. Wow!

Ten years later, we have learned that the anthrax attacks were the work of a home grown kook, that terrorist devastation could lead our neighborhood into being the most progressive and economically vibrant place in New York City, that students would return to New York in droves, that the country could elect an African-American as President, and that we could manage to screw up our economy all on our own!

What of New York Law School ten years later? After the disaster, we grew stronger, more confident, more active, more committed. We took advantage of the rebounding and resilience of TriBeCa to make a record sale of some of our property, used the proceeds to secure the financing that built a wonderful new building that will keep us as a downtown institution in perpetuity (see next page), enrolled the best students ever to attend the law school, expanded our programs in ways we could not have imagined before 9/11, grew our resources beyond our fondest dreams, and established a remarkably student-centric program. Was all this also an effect of 9/11?

I think so. The larger meaning of 9/11 for all of us here on that day was a reminder that some things are beyond our control, that evil exists in the world, and that blindly striking out rarely is a satisfactory answer to a problem. 9/11 also taught us that we must control what we can control — our programs, our treatment of each other, our talent put to use to add value, our outreach to those in need, and our mutual respect. It taught us to make the best of those things, to learn from the past, and then to look forward.

The chronicle contained in *Eight Blocks Away* decodes the DNA of New York Law School and all of us who work and study here. Though the events of 9/11 are now a decade behind us, their impact and the lessons that they have taught us will forever remain indelible.





# Foreword

New York Law School stands in the middle of Tribeca, eight blocks north of the site of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the third week of the semester, was sunny and mild. Several classes were scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., so by 8:46 several dozen students, a few faculty members, and early arriving staff were on campus or just entering when the first airplane slammed into the north tower with a shattering boom. Many rushed outside; others were on street corners in time to see the second airplane flying low and strike the south tower ten minutes later. A few, who lived at or near the site, heard and saw the entire attack unfold. Within minutes the dean, who had been in his office, was urging people off the streets and into the sanctuary of school. By shortly after 9 school was officially closed, and through the day students, staff, and faculty managed to wend their way home as best they could. Some, departing early, caught subways. Others organized carpools. Many just walked north or east. By afternoon the school buildings, which were physically intact, lost their ties to the world: electrical power ceased, phone lines went down, computers were out, Internet connection was severed. For two weeks, regular activities were suspended. For several days, very access to the campus was out of the question except for a small facilities crew, struggling to connect an external generator and to survey for damage. Regrouping, the dean, associate deans, and senior staff spent hours on the phone from their homes in daily conference calls to organize the return.

By Monday, September 17, with power partially restored, faculty and senior staff found their way through the phalanx of police barricades to meet, embrace, and plan the recovery. A false bomb alert in the early afternoon, aimed at ConEdison workers laboring to repair electrical connections, sent everyone home again. A week later, on Monday, September 24, the school returned to life, with classes, teach-ins, and visiting mental health professionals on hand to greet all who were struggling to learn new ways to study, teach, and commute. Though electrical power was back, telephone and Internet service was spotty, not fully restored until after Thanksgiving. Because of byzantine cable connections beneath the streets, most telephones could not dial beyond the confines of New York City, though a few fax lines could dial out to the world. Even had it been possible for people to ignore the daily headlines, look through the hole in the sky

where the twin towers had stood, and put out of mind the inconveniences of travel, a persistent, at times overpowering foul odor permeated the air, waxing and waning with the temperature and breezes, making it impossible to forget the horror. Not until January, when the fires that had burned for months were finally damped out, did the air quality recover.

Normalcy, if that is what it was, returned outwardly in the spring. The police and National Guard presence gradually diminished; physical barricades were removed. Some commutes eased, though bridge closings and train and subway schedules would continue to plague daily travel arrangements of many for well more than a year. As a community so close to the center of the tragedy, New York Law School was incredibly lucky. Our deaths were mercifully few: four alumni who had been working in World Trade Center offices. No active member of the School—student, staff, or faculty—was killed (though many had friends or acquaintances or relatives who died), and very few sustained any sort of physical injury. Several students, members of the City's uniformed services and others, performed heroically that day and through the days and weeks to come.

Whether members of the School community have recovered emotionally is, however, another story. For the largest part of the community, the young students, most of whom were either just out of college or within a few years of their college days, the shock was palpable. They had never known an America that was other than invincible and prosperous. Few even remembered the bombing of the World Trade Center eight years earlier. Pearl Harbor was the stuff of ancient history. Stock markets were only supposed to go up. The attack left many faculty and staff similarly shaken, perhaps in inverse relation to age and memory of assassinations, the Vietnam war, recessions and inflations, political corruption, and a fistful of other national scandals. But no one was unscathed, for all were witnesses to a horrific moment that would change the country, in ways still difficult to tell, forever.

In the weeks immediately after the attack, students, staff, and faculty were asked to put their thoughts on paper. For some, writing was cathartic; others found it an impossible assignment. What follows is a record of that day and the days that followed by all who chose to write, a record of a time when grief, of this community, was universal, of a unique moment that must never be forgotten.

# Eyewitnesses

[Eyewitness accounts are printed in alphabetical order; identification  
is as of September 11, 2001]



## Cory M. Baker

Class of 2002, day division

*Waiting room for volunteers at the Red Cross, Sept. 11, 12:44 PM*

The feeling is unlike anything before; I see a skyline raped of its soul and a city in mourning of the undead. The streets are crowded with people walking without direction. But how can we sit at home and watch as firefighters are covered in soot and blood, their lungs fill with smoke as my breath flows freely with each gasp to the broadcast I watch. So I put on my rollerblades and skate as fast as I can to the Red Cross. The building is filled with love and concern but now I feel even more helpless than I did in my apartment. I have no degree in medicine, no certification in mental health. So what do they want with a third year law student with good speaking skills and Hebrew fluency? To fill out a form and sit and wait. Send me to the trenches; let me dig, bandage and console. Let me use my hands to hold another's. Hatred came first, confusion soon followed. The City is stripped of communication. Our cell phones don't work and our language is focused. There is no talk of sports or market flow. No plans for the weekend or parties to go to. Just conversation of fear and opinions. Terrorists and politics and even the occasional alien reference.

I sit in a room filled with Supermen all waiting to bear our crests and fly. But our capes are clipped. We wait some more. Gotham cries and they tell me to wait?

## Frank Chaney

Class of 2005, evening division

I was sitting in my car at the Staten Island ferry terminal waiting to drive onto the boat when the first plane hit. I didn't see it or even hear it, but I had the car radio on and just as I was driving onto the boat it said there was report of an explosion at the World Trade Center. Then the radio went dead. As soon as I drove the car onto the boat, I jumped out, ran to the back of the boat and looked up. I

couldn't see the towers—the ferry terminal blocked the view—but I could see the sky full of smoke and paper like confetti glittering in the morning sun.

As the ferry pulled away from Manhattan, one, two, then more and more people came to the back of the boat and we all stared, open-mouthed, horror-stricken at the flames and smoke pouring out of the side of the north tower. This is bad, I kept saying, over and over. This is really bad.

Then the second plane flew low over the top of the boat, its wings see-sawing slightly from side to side and seemingly headed down toward the water. Its appearance was so sudden it was a shock and I knew right away that something was wrong because it was such a big plane and shouldn't have been flying that low, let alone so unsteadily. It veered up and, as we watched, unbelieving, banked sharply left and rammed into the south tower, exploding into a ball of flame. Women screamed and men cursed. I clasped my hands to my face and turned in circles, muttering, Oh my God, over and over.

I got to Staten Island and drove off the boat, which was the last one going in or out of Manhattan. After that, they locked the city down. We stood on the shore, looking across to lower Manhattan and the two towers in flame and blowing black smoke. When the first tower collapsed, we didn't realize at first what had happened and only a few voices cried out. But as the smoke drifted away, some one said, "It's gone!" As more and more of the smoke drifted away, revealing nothing but empty sky, people began to moan and cry. A friend with whom I was standing turned to me just as I did to him. Both of us had realized the same thing in the same moment—that it was surely only a matter of time before the second tower fell, too. When it did, there was an eerie silence. Someone said, There it goes! People simply stood and wept in silence.

I went down the street to a bar and even though it was only 10:30 in the morning, I ordered a drink, gulped it down and ordered another. Above the bar was a television showing the smoking skyline of Manhattan and just below it, out the window, was the same picture. Very strange. People began coming in, having come off the ferry, which was running again but only to evacuate people. Some were engulfed in the arms of weeping friends and family. Some came in alone and sat down, staring straight ahead, covered from head to toe in fine, gray dust. No one spoke to them.

I went back to my office and listened to the radio, hoping to hear that I could get on a ferry and get back home. I thought that working for the Borough President I would be able to pull some strings and get on a ferry boat back to the city, but the police chief said, no way. I desperately wanted to get home so I walked across the street to the ferry terminal. It was crowded with cops, firemen and people in various blue jackets with big yellow letters. It was hard to tell who was in charge or what exactly was going on. So I just kept showing my city ID card and asking one cop after another, “Any chance I can get on the next boat?” Finally, one cop directed me to his sergeant, who told me, with a sympathetic sigh, he’d let me get on the boat but that he couldn’t guarantee that I’d be allowed to get off on the other side or that even if I did that I could make it through. I said I’d take that chance. I just wanted to get home.

I was the only civilian on the boat—everyone else was a fireman, cop or medic. As we approached Manhattan, a huge plume of gray smoke suddenly billowed up and a two-way radio crackled: building seven had just collapsed. The firemen began to don their gear and I felt like I was on a landing craft going in to the beach at Normandy. Smoke and dust was everywhere, obscuring the buildings and even the streets, and I began to wonder how I was going to make it through to 36th Street and if I’d made mistake coming back to the city. The boat docked and I walked off, surrounded by cops and firemen, my briefcase slung across my back. No one even noticed me.

The smoke was blowing across to the east—you could barely see the Brooklyn Bridge—so I decided to try walking up along the Hudson River, even though the disaster area was close by there. I was completely alone as I walked. Everywhere, everything was covered with thick, gray powder. There was paper everywhere—memos, letters, file folders that just that morning had been sitting on someone’s desk but now laying on the ground, stuck in the trees, floating in the river. Bicycles and baby strollers lay on their sides, abandoned. Here and there was an odd shoe, a hat, a backpack, a briefcase, all lost or tossed aside in the effort to escape.

I made it almost as far as the World Financial Center when I ran into a group of firemen and cops, who were surprised to see me. “Where the hell did you come from?” they asked. I told them and then said that I was trying to get uptown to



36th Street. “Can I get through here?” I asked. They all just laughed and shook their heads, “No fuckin’ way.” They told me that if I kept going, I’d be put on a boat to New Jersey. “What about the East River?” I asked. “Maybe,” they said. I doubled back and cut across town just north of Battery Park.

It was all just desolation everywhere I walked. The streets were empty except for myself and a few cops who ignored me, looking as I must’ve, like just another survivor. I wrapped my tie around my nose and mouth to protect against the thick smoke that by now had covered me from my hair to my shoes. I zig-zagged my way through the now-empty streets of the financial district, trying to avoid the police barricades, afraid they would stop me and make me go back. Finally, I got to the East River and walked north, past an abandoned South Street Seaport and the Pathmark at Pike Slip, just past the Manhattan Bridge which was barricaded and seemed to be some sort of supply and staging area. At Grand Street, I stopped and looked back. The setting sun lit up the drifting cloud of dust and smoke with glowing yellow, orange, red and purple. It was horribly beautiful.

At Houston Street, I walked across to First Avenue, so tired by then that I was practically staggering, everyone staring at me, covered in dust. I got a bus going uptown, sat down and started to cry. When I got off the bus, I stopped in a liquor store and bought a bottle of wine before slowly trudging up the hill to home. When I got there, my fiancé rushed to greet me with a hug but stopped short when she saw me covered in dust. She got a plastic garbage bag and held it open as I took off my dust-covered clothes and shoes right there in the foyer, dropping each item in the garbage bag. I took a shower and sat in front of the TV, too distracted and too tired to open the bottle of wine or to eat. Eventually, I fell fitfully asleep.

I try not to dwell on what happened and carry on as normally as possible because I think it’s the least I can do. I think of my parents’ generation carrying on, living bravely, during World War II and I try to emulate them, affecting a certain jaunty defiance. But I have not slept well since. As I walk around my city that is now both familiar and strange, I’m afraid to look up. Afraid of what I might see.

## Stephen J. Ellmann

Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Professor

This account is based on notes I wrote to myself on September 30; already some details had undoubtedly gotten confused, and the chronology that follows may not be entirely correct. But I hope it conveys the flavor of those hours, and the days that followed, as I experienced them.

On September 11 I thought about taking a slightly later train but decided not to dawdle. That meant I passed through the World Financial Center ferry dock around 8:15, rather than around 8:40. When the planes hit the WTC towers, I was in my office working; afterwards, when I learned what had happened, I realized I had felt both impacts. I had vaguely thought that somebody had dropped something upstairs, although the impacts had seemed unusually large.

I did not realize what had actually happened until about 9:15, when a colleague who had already begun teaching her 9:00 class (as I think many faculty members did that morning, before we all understood what was happening) came into my office and said that we needed to do something for students who were upset. Soon another colleague came by, going door to door to spread the word. I realized that I didn't know where my wife Nancy was—she works in a building across from the World Trade Center and commutes via the PATH station there—and got very worried. A little later I got back to my office and started calling home. At this stage the phones were still working, though clogged. I also had my cellphone with me, something that until then I'd rarely done, and fortunately it was with a system that held up through the whole attack and aftermath. Then I think I went out of my office for a while. I may have gone over to the Dean's office for the first of the running conversations/meetings that went on that morning. In the next 20 minutes or so I got back to my office and to my great relief found a message from Nancy. Fortunately (as I realized later) she had gotten the news while she was still at the train station in our home town, and so she hadn't come into town and was safe. (Her building, however, will be closed for at least 6-12 months, perhaps much longer; she and her colleagues are scattered around the city.) This also meant that she'd be able to respond to any needs our two grade-school children

might have. I told her that I was safe too. As it turned out, that might have been premature, because the buildings had not yet fallen.

Around this time I went outside. At Church Street I could see the smoke coming from the World Trade Center. I crossed the street and from the northeast corner of Worth & Church I could clearly see both buildings burning. It seemed as if 10–20 floors of each were torn up or burning. I was struck by the fact that they were still standing. I think I felt impressed that they could withstand this.

Then I went back inside, feeling that there was work to do helping the students. I think it was in this period that I went downstairs to the students’ basement area. The room was full, though not packed solid, with people watching the events on TV. I stood there for a while watching. I wanted to make an announcement from the front of the room, to the effect that they should ask the Dean’s office if they had any questions, but there was no pause in the news, so eventually I went around the room and said this to a few groups of people.

The main issue we faced in a series of discussions in the Dean’s office and elsewhere was what to advise people to do: stay or go. Rick Matasar felt the answer was “stay,” but no one knew for sure—how could we? we were all novices in facing terrorism—and still we had to give the best advice we could. At one point, probably when the first building fell, we had been talking in the Dean’s office, and a colleague said to me that she wasn’t sure we were safe staying in the building. I went to a window of the office on Church Street and stuck my head out. There was an immense gray cloud, which had reached one block south of us; I thought it was coming right on up the street and at that point I started saying that we should go. As I went down the stairs saying this, another colleague asked what decision had been made, and I realized that there had not been any collective decision. So I went back up to try to sort things out. Then I may have looked out again, and seen that the cloud wasn’t coming any further. From there I think I went to the student center, where the Dean was telling a group of students in the student center that we were being advised by the police to stay inside till the air quality improved. But “the police” consisted of one policeman, whom I’d spoken with earlier, and all he knew was what he was getting over his walkie-talkie. Fortunately, both staying and going were, as events turned out, reasonable choices, so very little turned on whether we got this right or not. But

I felt afterwards that the confusion we'd felt, or I'd felt, about this little decision reflected how much more confusing and difficult the decisions were that the government had to make, and that this was a reason to be sympathetic to the President (despite his absence from view that first day).

The next phase was a meeting with the students in the Stiefel Room. Rick was urging people to remain calm. Then we saw people running north on Church Street; this may have been when the second tower went down. (I think I'd also seen this earlier, at the time of the first tower falling.) A woman standing behind me, near the door of the Stiefel Room, cried out in a panicky voice, "They're running." But a man also standing near us spoke up and said something to the effect that people in the crowd react irrationally, and our own group settled down again. Someone, perhaps Joan Fishman, pointed out to me that there was too much glass in the Stiefel Room, and I pointed this out to Rick after he spoke and he agreed. So I spent some time going around the Stiefel Room telling people that they should probably move to the student center or the basement, because of this, and the room emptied out.

By this time, there didn't seem to be a great deal to do, and I went back to my office. I spoke with Nancy on the phone again and we agreed that I should try to leave, since transport across the Hudson might get more and more difficult. Another colleague, Mike Nussman, was going to make the drive to New Jersey, and I planned to join him; in the meantime, I sent a couple of e-mails, including one to friends in South Africa, from which I had returned on September 10. As I realized in the next days, I was lucky to have come back when I did, since if I'd been flying in later I'd have been stranded somewhere waiting for the US airports to open up again; but what struck me then was the irony that I'd just come back from South Africa, a country where ordinary life is imperiled by crime, to what I'd thought was the safety of home. I wrote to my friends that it was a strange world we were now in. That was one of the themes of the morning, as people talked and waited; we all agreed that the world would never be the same.

Mike and Kitty Reyes, driving another car, got ready to go around 12:30. I checked in with Rick to see if there was any reason for me to stay longer; he said no. Off we went, a group of faculty, administrators and students. It took a long time, but actually the only point where we hit really slow traffic was around

Columbus Circle. After that, we headed north, past the closed G.W. Bridge (we'd set out when we did partly based on news that the bridge was open, and later during our drive, it did briefly open, but by then we were already past it), and eventually crossed the Hudson at the Tappan Zee. Then we drove south on the Garden State Parkway; we could see the smoke from the World Trade Center site from the road.

While we drove, I used my cellphone. Thanks to the miracles of modern technology I was able to leave a message for one of my sisters in England while we drove away from the site of a terrorist attack. My grown son Brian also called me; a former radio repairman in the Marines, he now works on cellphone radio installation for Nextel in New Jersey and had not been in New York at the time of the attacks. In the days to come, though, he would work on emergency communications for the rescue effort (Nextel distributed phones to emergency crews at ground zero); one of his first jobs was installing equipment at the Holland Tunnel, which at that time still looked like it just might be a target. Later I learned that in the course of these days Brian was at ground zero twice. He is now thinking about re-enlisting in the active reserves.

Mike Nussman dropped Fred DeJohn, Seth Harris, and me at the parking lot where I'd left my car a few hours earlier, on my way in to a normal day of work. I dropped Seth off at his house, then stopped with Fred at mine. Nancy got back to the house with the kids at almost the same moment; I went over to her and we hugged. Then I drove Fred home. On the way back, I thought of stopping at a local park on a ridge with a view of New York. But the police had blocked off the park to cars; there was a stream of people walking in to take this same look. In subsequent days, I would run or walk up, and there were always people there. Gradually candles accumulated too. It was easy to see the smoke coming up from the site, day after day.

My family and I wound up across the street with friends from the neighborhood. Most of the adults were glued to the screen, horrified and fascinated by the news and glad to be with each other. But we were trying to keep the kids—all of us had small children—from watching. Our 9-year-old son was old enough to want to watch, and fairly early on, Nancy took him home, in the hope that we could keep things as normal as possible for him. Even before I got home, Nancy

and I had agreed on the phone that the kids needed to be told, simply but honestly, what had happened, but it was never easy to decide just how much to say. In the following days our 9-year-old wouldn't show any intense interest in the news, but he loves to watch Sportscenter on ESPN early in the morning. I got up and watched with him once or twice, and that week there was no sports news—only athlete after athlete reacting to the attacks. The schools, meanwhile, tried to keep the kids' spirits up, but with their own uncertainties: we heard that our 9-year-old's school announced at first that there was bad traffic in NYC on Sept. 11, and I think our 1st-grade daughter's school never did explicitly announce that two children at the school had lost parents in the attack. Meanwhile the kids were no doubt carrying on their own discussions, out on the playground.

In the days after the attack, NYLS was shut. The deans met repeatedly by conference call, and communicated by e-mail as a list of personal e-mails for faculty and administrative people gradually was accumulated. These meetings were fruitful, I think, even though a lot of what we did was simply to exchange information—since there were severe limits on what we could actually do, not being in the building and not having access to our students' addresses or phone numbers. It was good to have something to do and to focus on. At the same time, it was somewhat relaxing to be unable to go to work. The weather was beautiful most of that week, including the day of the attack—it's been beautiful all fall, a beautiful, terrible season. I exercised fairly regularly while doing a lot of talking on the phone.

After 6 days of phone calls, we came back to our building on the Monday after the attacks. Around mid-day we had a small fire, due to a power surge resulting from the disruption of the power grid. When we got back in the building and resumed the faculty meeting that had begun, this time in the reading area on the third floor of the library, there was a bomb scare—caused, no doubt, by someone who caught wind of the fire department's activity and decided to add to the difficulties of the day. As we waited across the street, Rick announced that we would not try to continue the faculty meeting, but that people could go back in the building in small groups to retrieve their bags. I already had my back pack and chose not to go back in. Several of us walked north on foot to the PATH station and then home.

But that Thursday, after Rosh Hashanah, we were back in the building, with town meetings for students that day and the following day the first of the series of teach-ins that we've held on the war. That Friday we also held a meeting of NY area law school people and public interest lawyers to discuss what schools could do to respond to the massive legal needs and questions that we face in the aftermath of the attacks. I'd led the organizing of this meeting; it might have been easier to hold it somewhere other than NYLS, since access to our area was still restricted, but we felt it was important for NYLS, as the law school closest to the attacks, to take the lead in and be the host of the first law school response to what had happened. Since then many people at NYLS have continued to work on developing programs in which members of our community can use their skills, legal and non-legal, to help ease the suffering resulting from the terrorist attacks. We've recently established a webpage which is meant to serve as a resource for other schools shaping their responses to this attack, and we are connecting our students to various volunteer activities, lending our space to community groups, and considering a range of programs and courses to address the aftermath.

We felt on September 11 that the world had changed irrevocably. In some ways that's true, and the changes are disturbing. Lower Manhattan is a changed place, filled with signs of the attacks and re-shaped with precautions against additional ones. Every so often I wonder if disaster will strike that day. But the routine of work continues, the same as ever except busier and somewhat more emotionally intense. Just as we've worked to resume classes and faculty workshops and scholarship, so at home the rhythm of the kids' soccer practices and games has been restored. In this beautiful fall most of what we do is the same as it was, just more precious and more vulnerable.

## Sommer Everson

Class of 2004, day division

You've seen the pictures and heard the statistics from the attack on our country.

On the one-month anniversary from my own flight from Colorado to New York to attend law school, I was blocks away from the terror. I had planned to write and give you a worm's eye view of the Big Apple.

However, on the morning of September 11, while I was in class only eight blocks from the World Trade Center, the beautiful view was shattered. Two hijacked planes were flown straight into the World Trade Center Twin Towers.

I can't relay the horrible smell from the burning buildings, or the feelings of terror as the situation unfolded, but what follows is the view I had of the worst terrorist attack to ever take place on U.S. soil.

"A plane just hit a building." A classmate burst into the rooms in tears.

We had felt it, not even eight blocks away from the World Trade Center as we filtered in for torts class at New York Law School. A boom, the building shook. And then the sirens. So many sirens.

We ran to the window. Down on the street, we saw hundreds of people stopped, just looking.

We didn't know it was a terrorist attack. We thought it was an accident. A horrible accident.

Amidst the sirens, class started. Negligence. I don't think any of us will forget the topic, but we won't remember the lecture. Another classmate came in. "It was the World Trade Center."

And then a second boom. We thought it was the building crashing down. We didn't know it was another plane, the other tower.

Another classmate came in, almost hysterical, from frantically attempting to call a friend in the World Trade Center. "Class is canceled. They want us to get out."

Our cell phones were all dead. The tower for them was on top of the World Trade Center. I ran to a computer to email home. "I am ok," I quickly typed. Someone said, "Did you hear? They got the Pentagon too."

The floor rumbled underneath. Horrified, I turned to a friend. "It's only the subway." The subway. I was scared by the subway.

We were ushered into a meeting hall. As the Dean talked contingency plans, we looked out the window. Hundreds of people were running in the streets. It was a surrealistic scene from Independence Day.



Reality, of sorts, set it. We were stuck in Manhattan. What should we do? Walk north and try to get out of the city? Stay?

Our school has a bomb shelter from years past. It is the copy center now. I had once joked that it was nice to know that we had a place to go in case of attack. It wasn't a joke now. Where was the next target? The Empire State Building? Or maybe the Federal Courthouse just up the street.

Then just how close we were started to sink it. A friend was a block away when it happened. She saw the explosion and had to run to escape the debris. "I got behind a tall man and just ran."

As we saw the first bits of footage on TV, after the first building collapsed, I saw something that will be with me forever: the U-turn sign for the World Trade Center, bent, mangled and surrounded by rubble. I take the World Trade Center bus to school. My bus had made that U-turn at that sign just before 8:30 a.m. and then stopped in front of the World Trade Center to let people off. The plane hit twenty minutes later. I was that close. If it had happened on a Monday or Wednesday, I would have been there when it hit—my class starts a half-hour later on those days.

And worse. Most of the passengers on that bus get off at that stop. They work there. All those people I had just been on the bus with. Dead.

Please not everyone, I prayed. Not the person I joked with as we rode home together soaking wet from a sudden downpour on Monday. Not the serious guy I had sat next to last week. Not the person who called to wish her friend a happy birthday as she rode into work.

And my neighbors. We take the ferry into the city together every morning. That's where they work. Some of the driveways in my neighborhood are frighteningly empty of cars. They are all still parked in the ferry parking lot waiting for their owners to come home. Some of them never will.

Then, another cold realization. I wanted to work at the World Trade Center. That was a big reason why I came to New York. I interned at the WTC in Washington State while I was in college. I had already been talking to a neighbor who had friends working for Port Authority, located in the World Trade Center. She was going to introduce me to them so I could talk to them about possibly interning there this summer. I saw her yesterday, and she said matter-of-factly, as only a

person in shock can, “Well, I guess you will have to look for a different summer job. All the people I work with there are gone.” It could have been me.

Another friend had tried to go home. He came back in shock. “I will never be able to get what I just saw out of my head,” he said. He walked toward the subway and looked up at the Twin Towers. He saw people in suits standing in the gaping hole left from the plane eighty floors above, waving desperately for help as the fire burned around them. Then they jumped. He saw people jump from the eightieth floor to their death. And then he saw the building collapse.

Beyond this horrible loss of human life there are other casualties from this barbaric act. These terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, a major hub for international trade and headquarters for many corporations. When I was at the Tacoma office in college, we called the World Trade Center in New York when we needed official information. They are central to World Trade Centers across the nation and their information is used around the world. It is now just a part of the mess of ash and rubble strewn across lower Manhattan today.

But out of this horrible nightmare has come an amazing scene. There is a gaping hole in the Manhattan skyline, but it is being filled with human kindness, an outpouring of support and tremendous patriotism.

The emergency workers’ response was incredible. Nothing about this nightmare is normal, but they handled it like it was a daily routine. Roads were blocked off for emergency vehicles, police officers directed pedestrian traffic. A group of us from school left at 2:30 p.m. to get out of downtown before the wind changed and blew the smoke north. We made our way north, leaving behind a war zone.

We finally got to the ferry pier. It was amazing. Thousands of people waiting in line, no ropes, just people taking their place in a line that stretched four city blocks and wound around. CNN was set up there. We watched tour busses carrying police officers speeding toward lower Manhattan. All kinds of boats were waiting to get us across the river. Tug boats, tourist boats. As we waited to board a boat, any boat, a man came around carrying bottled water and cups for anyone thirsty. We boarded a fancy dinner cruise ship to go home. We joked about this luxury treatment. How else do you deal with witnessing, first-hand, an act of war against your country?

A friend came home with me—she lives past where the highways were closed, and I live on the river in New Jersey. The roads were closed, and we walked several miles to get home. As we trudged along with our backpacks and bags with a steady stream of people, it felt as though we were refugees escaping a war zone.

While we walked, we looked back toward downtown Manhattan, as if maybe if we looked just one more time, the cloud of smoke would disappear and the Twin Towers would be standing in their rightful place. If only it were that easy.

People have asked me if I am going to pack my bags and run home to Colorado. The answer is no. To do that is to let terrorism win. I will not be scared anymore. I am furious. How dare someone attack us! It is now up to all of us to unite and show them—and the world—that we are survivors and will triumph in the end. And we will, because we are the people of the United States of America.

## David L. Ferstendig

Adjunct Professor

I had to be down in court that day. The day before, I had successfully opposed a motion for an order of attachment seeking to restrain my client's bank account. There was a temporary restraining order in place, however, and I needed the judge to sign an order. . . . fast. My client's money was being held up. The judge suggested I bring a proposed order down to New York Supreme Court on Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001. I walked out of the subway across the street from 60 Centre Street at sometime between 8:50 and 8:55 am. I noticed that people were looking up in the air and pointing. I looked up as I crossed the street, and saw smoke billowing out of one of the towers. "A plane flew into the World Trade Center," someone remarked. Immediately, I tried to call my wife on my cell phone, but I could not get through. Fortunately, I was able to use one of the pay phones in the court. I told my wife what I thought had happened—but she had already heard the news—and I asked her to call my kids and parents and tell them I was fine. At this point, I thought this was just a plane that veered off

course. Moments later I heard another blast. I thought it was a secondary explosion caused by the first “crash.”

I went up the Judge’s courtroom, but it was closed. It was too early. But I had to get the order signed. My client’s money was being restrained. So I ran up to the Judge’s chambers. A court officer said I would have to wait. Suddenly, court officers ran into a room and were being given instructions. All I could hear was “check every courtroom.” “Were they evacuating the courthouse?” I asked. No, not yet.

The court officer with whom I spoke first told me to sit down and wait. At about 9:30 a.m. I went back down to the Judge’s courtroom—it was open, but no one except the Judge’s clerk was inside. I told the clerk that I needed an order signed. She called the Judge, who came out some time later and told me to sit while he reviewed the proposed order. Two lawyers walked into the courtroom.

The other tower had been hit. It is a terrorist action. How can this be happening? The Judge walks back into the courtroom. “I’ve signed the order. You better get a copy now, and return the original to me so that we can have it entered.” The twin towers are burning; people must be trapped. But I have to get the order copied. My client’s money is being restrained. I’m told to go to the executive clerk’s office; they have a copy machine. When I get there, however, the machine is “out of order.” I asked the clerk where another copy machine is located. He takes the order from me and says he will copy it “in the back.” Another clerk tells me, the pentagon has been hit. Are we at war? But I must have that order. My client’s money is being restrained. The clerk gives me the original order and the copy, I wish all the clerks well, I run back to the courtroom to return the original order and I proceed down the steps. When I reach the ground floor, I again go to the pay phones to call my wife. As I begin to dial, the court officers begin to scream at everyone to leave the court “now!” As I leave the courthouse, I experience one of the most frightening moments of my life. Thousands of people running. Officers screaming “run north.” Miles later I reach my office. I made it. And I had my order. . . . So what? And that has been the emotion virtually every day since. So what? People killed. Lives destroyed. Indescribable pain and grief. My children having to see evil up close. I thought I had perspective before September 11. Nothing will be the same.

## Annette Gordon-Reed

Professor

*excerpts from an interview in In Brief, Spring 2002*

“They’re trying to kill us,” Professor Annette Gordon-Reed remembers blurting out to her husband as they found each other in the crowd streaming away from the second explosion that rocked the World Trade Center.

For the legal historian and noted Thomas Jefferson scholar (and biographer of Vernon Jordan), the attack on September 11 had a profound effect on her personal outlook and philosophy. Not only did she find herself running for her life, swept up in the immediate mayhem at the foot of the towers after the first plane hit, but she also lost her apartment to the blast, and, eventually, her political bearings.

When the first plane smashed into the North Tower, Professor Gordon-Reed had been looking at a tape at Sam Goody on the South Tower concourse. Someone yelled, “Get outta here!” and she ran, thinking only of her husband, who was handing out pamphlets at the World Financial Center (it was a local primary election day in New York), and wondering how a plane possibly could have crashed on such a beautiful, clear day.

As she weaved through the once-familiar streets of her treasured neighborhood in the shadow of the World Trade Center, where she lived and worked, she pushed all other thoughts away and concentrated on finding her husband and getting away.

“I think when something like that happens, you become very, very focused,” Professor Gordon-Reed said. “I don’t remember a time in my life when I was more clear about what it was that I should be doing. It’s just something that sort of takes over.”

By the time she had slowed enough to look up, she watched the second plane bank and turn directly into the South Tower. It was then that she knew her homeland was under attack and an unexpected anger started to smolder.

She had thought the fall semester of 2001 would be all about promoting her

new book, *Vernon Can Read! A Memoir*, co-authored with Vernon Jordan, and teaching her usual schedule of classes, “which had been going really well.”

But then normalcy ended. She found herself walking with her husband and the tide of humanity the several miles to Central Park West, to the school where she knew her children would be safe, if worried. The family reunited joyfully that day, found temporary shelter, and eventually relocated uptown.

“It was just sort of surreal. It was this wonderful, wonderful day—beautiful day—and nothing uptown looked strange,” Professor Gordon-Reed said later of her pilgrimage from Ground Zero. “The only thing that was weird about it is that there were just hundreds of people. . . looking like a stream of refugees in the United States, walking up Central Park West.”

From that point forward, she has tried to understand what happened. She has read the daily biographical sketches of the September 11 victims published in *The New York Times* both as a tribute to those who died and a personal reminder, by contrast, of how personally fortunate she felt.

“It makes you feel very vulnerable to know that anything could have happened,” Professor Gordon-Reed said. “Reading those pieces every day just makes you think about life and how important it is to take it seriously. I mean, to live it in a way that is not wasteful and, appreciate your family and your friends.”

She has also tried to integrate these concerns into her coursework where appropriate, as in her Criminal Procedure Investigation class where Fourth Amendment issues of racial profiling, material witnesses, and probable cause have new relevance.

Unlike some intellectuals on the left-liberal end of the political spectrum who disputed the correct response to the attack on September 11, Professor Gordon-Reed had no doubt about her own position. But the debate by others of a supposedly similar political leaning left her confused and feeling the need for reassessment. She planned to write about her personal response and the political fallout that followed.

“It was strange to me to think that people who were Americans could not be outraged at the fact that people were trying to kill other Americans in the heart of two of the greatest cities in America,” Professor Gordon-Reed said. “This is so personal to me, because of the way all of this came about. It isn’t a game.”

## Lawrence Grosberg

Professor and Director of the Lawyering Skills Program

*This diary started shortly after I got back to the office on Tuesday, 9/11, about 11:30. After I made several family calls, I looked at my email, and amazingly, already had messages from several people around the country and farther. One woman with whom I had worked in Moscow emailed me her concern and asked for information. That request from Elena led to my quickly starting to write.*

Elena,

Let me start with Tuesday. I need to put this down for my own sanity. I was in Battery Park, about fifty yards from the Staten Island Ferry at the tip of Manhattan. It was a beautiful day; crisp clear blue sky. I was sitting on a park bench reviewing some documents for an arbitration that I was due to chair at 9:30. The World Trade Center is about 5-6 blocks north of where I was sitting. It was the first time I had to be in this area for business in many, many months.

About 8:45, I heard a loud bang. I didn't pay too much attention to it. I had been distracted by the many tourists walking by to go to the Statue of Liberty. It was such a beautiful day. I started to walk east about a block to 125 Broad Street, where I was scheduled to be on the 36th floor. 125 is the last building on Broad before you get to the water of the Harbor. I looked up to the left, north, and saw flames and smoke coming out of the windows of the WTC. I thought a helicopter had crashed into the building. Within minutes, a fire engine drove by and I thought: boy, I wouldn't want to be a fire fighter today!! How do they even fight a fire in a skyscraper!! I watched the flames for a very few minutes and started to walk up the steps to 125 Broad and suddenly there was a huge crash. Debris was flying down Broad Street in my direction from the WTC. You could see sparkling debris, a chandelier breaking in a million pieces or maybe glass or shiny steel or whatever, but it was gigantic. It was raining large chunks of debris in what looked like a slow motion fashion.

At that moment, about 9:00, I really didn't know what was going on. I was stunned and really only standing for a few moments in front of 125 Broad. Suddenly, I saw three men carrying brief cases and running out of the building,

putting on their suit coats, screaming “Get the fuck out of the building!! A huge jumbo jet plane just crashed into the WTC. It was aimed right at the building. I saw it from the window on the 30th ?? floor.” This guy, a lawyer type, got in a brief scuffle with the lobby security guard who told him to calm down—“maybe you’re imagining it.” The lawyer type got more upset and distraught and repeated it, and the security guard told the man to do what he had to do. He quickly left. I decided I would NOT go to the 36th floor. All of this maybe took a minute!

I immediately went out on the street where debris was still floating down. I wanted to hear the radio or a tv. People were calling cell phones and I heard several people repeat that a plane, not a small plane, but a large jumbo jet had crashed into the WTC. . . . I’m going to have to continue my story later. I have to get on the phone. — Larry

Elena,

Here is a second installment:

But, it really was still unclear to me at 9:10 or so, standing on the street corner of Broad and ?? Kitty korner from one state street plaza, what had happened. People were running south on Broad, away from the WTC. People near me were looking up at the flying debris and the flames and smoke from the towers, with differing looks of shock, disbelief and horror. The guy who I saw running out of 125 Broad St. had a look of terror that I will not soon forget. As the morning went on I saw similar looks, as well as weeping, loud crying and people being held by others and simply breaking down. I must have walked 3-4 blocks east and a little north of 125 Broad. While there were millions of cell phones and people talking into them, I did not see or hear one radio and I looked in several fast food restaurants and delis and no one had a radio or a t.v. I finally got to a bar that had a t.v., maybe 9:30 or so by this time. It was a Kilarneys type bar; one door opened on one street and a second on another street. I watched the t.v. in the increasingly crowded bar. I saw for the first time the videos of the two crashes. It was amazing how fast they had gotten the film. It was soon crystal clear that it was terrorists. Around 10:00 or so, we saw the first building collapse on t.v. Within what seemed like 30 seconds or less (probably a minute or two), I happened to look out one door to the bar first, and then to the other. Both doors were engulfed in dark smoke, or at least it looked like smoke. I went to one door and opened it and



couldn't see anything, even a foot in front of me. I then went to the other door, and it was the same. Amazingly, no one else in the bar seemed to be concerned. All seemed to be glued to the t.v. and, once again, maybe just stunned. For me, I had been watching t.v. in the usual fashion and watching CNN history before my eyes, and then suddenly, I was in the middle of it. I flashed to dying of fire or smoke in the bar and really became scared out of my mind. And then, I decided to quietly walk out of what I thought was the eastern door (still somewhat amazed that others in the bar were not reaching the same conclusion that I did—to leave!! I got outside and for the first 75 yards, I could barely see in front of me. It was raining soot or asbestos or some other debris (I've since heard it described as pulverized cement from the crushed floors of the WTC). I walked about a block and it started to clear up. Again, amazingly, those first couple of blocks, there were very few people walking on the street. It seemed like I walked a full block or two down one or two narrow Wall St. canyon streets and saw almost no people—at 10:10 or so on a business morning. I did see some people huddled in the lobbies of a couple of buildings. As I walked east, the sun then came out and it became even more eerie. I had gone in a couple of blocks from dark, thick grey smoke/debris, to bright sun on a gray coated street. It became totally surreal for me when I saw first one and then several people caked in the soot or pulverized cement walking east (apparently having been much closer to the WTC when it collapsed); they looked like walking ghosts or zombies or ??

I got over to the street paralleling the river at South Street Seaport, walking by what used to be Sloppy Louie's (where I first met Susan). At that point people were being herded by dozens and dozens of cops along the road, by the Fulton fish market and up toward the Brooklyn Bridge. People were walking quietly, some crying, some in a total daze, some looking at each in complete wonderment. I had a thin coating of soot; I had a light beige suit (it was the first time I had put on a suit in a about six months) so only my dark shoes and briefcase showed the soot. A good number of people like me were alone. Most people were silent. This slow march uptown (there was no place to go south and everyone was being guided north by the police so as to get as far away from the WTC as it is possible to go on the island of Manhattan without jumping in the East River). And, I must confess, the thought of jumping in had already crossed my mind several times,

beginning in the bar when it became engulfed in smoke. Another image that crossed my mind was the image of refugees marching on roads out of Bosnia for Kosovo or Vietnam or wherever. People were just going quietly for the most part. At the Brooklyn Bridge the marching crowd dispersed, some going on bridge, some like me going north behind the courts and the municipal building. Behind the police headquarters, there was a heavy flanks of cops guarding it and directing us way away from it. I saw two cops who I had as students last year and stopped to talk to them. They were detectives that had been called in fore emergency duty just to do this guard duty for the time-being and really new not much more than me. We consoled each other briefly before I went on to go a bit farther north and then west to Worth and back to school. I have to stop again, . . . More to follow. — Larry

Elena,

# 3. I'm just back from a drive to Detroit to visit our grandchildren and daughter and son-in-law. What a respite from NYC. But, it is amazing how the country has reacted with compassion and unity about the horrific aspects of all that has happened, from the smallest town to the larger urban areas. I wanted to continue my story, finish up those first moments after the crashes. . . . After, I walked from the Brooklyn Bridge north a bit, talked to some student/police officers and then west to the law school which is about 9-10 blocks north of the WTC. At school—around 11:30 or so, there were still a good number of people wandering around school, some watching the t.v. in the cafeteria & lounge, some just talking to each other. I spoke with some students, who among other things, talked about seeing people jump from the windows of WTC. If you walk to the corner, you can see [could see!!] the towers. They were quite upset. Others were talking somewhat in shock about why and could not really come to grips with the magnitude of what had happened. [As I write this almost a week later, it is clear that still, most people especially out of NYC, really do not fully comprehend how enormous the loss is.]

I had several frantic messages on my phone when I got to the office that morning from my wife and daughter and a couple of others. So, I tried to reach all of them just to let them know I was alright. For the next 36 hours we kept receiving messages and sending them to family and friends all over the country

just to give them the same message. I hung around the office a little longer watching t.v. and then went to my friend's office down the block, and stayed with him, John, and another woman who works in his office, Naomi, and I watched t.v. with them for a while. No subways were running at that point, so one question was how far we could go by foot. We wanted to try to give blood, and there were several places to do that. We decided to drive up to St. Vincents Hospital at 12th street. When we got there (there really was almost no traffic by this time, about 3:30) the hospital said they could not handle any more blood donors. We then tried at mid-town and did not succeed there as well.

John and I dropped off Naomi and then tried to locate my wife, Susan. We finally did and then just went back to John and Laura's apartment and stayed glued to the screen.

The next day (Wednesday), I decided to try to go down to school in Tribeca. I'm not sure why I wanted/needed to go, but I went. I took a subway to west 4th with, surprisingly, no trouble. At that point, I started walking south thru Washington Sq. Park and there was an extraordinary feeling that was palpable. There was almost no vehicular traffic and people were walking around talking quietly and with somber looks. I read the Times in the park for a while and at least 5 people asked me where I got the paper (I had to go to 3-4 news stands before I found one). People were walking slowly, a few crying. Looking south, the smoke was quite visible at the Towers about a mile or two south. Again, it was a crystal clear day with a blue sky and very few clouds. I walked about 4-5 blocks south to Houston and there were police barricades preventing access south of Houston to SOHO. The streets were being guarded by cops, many if not most from outside of NYC; people who had come into the city to help. They were pretty strict about who they let through and I was stopped.

I called a good friend, Anita, who lives in Soho and she came down, and got me. We went for lunch with her husband Jeff, a physician in the area whose practice was at a halt, and whose services at St. Vincent's were not needed, unfortunately, because there were few survivors. Walking around Soho (west Broadway) was like being in the twilight zone. There were no cars whatsoever, and very few pedestrians. Almost no stores were open. At Canal St., about 10 blocks south of Houston, there were more police barricades, blocking access south of Canal.

I looked around and found a gate open and quickly snuck in and went through a parking lot and down Church toward school.

Here, it was scary and even more unbelievable looking. Here, there were no regular cars, but only emergency vehicles of all sorts, ranging from fire engines, huge trucks carrying backhoes, dump trucks, etc. I saw two groups of fire fighters walking north, about 10-12 in each group, totally exhausted looking and silent. I don't know why they were walking, but they were. They were wearing their usual very heavy garb, and carrying tools, and left a powerful impression on me.

I passed one burned out car in the middle of the street, completely covered with that gray dust I saw the day before. I don't know how the car got there, because this was at least ten blocks north of the WTC. But there it was—like you saw in Bosnia or Lebanon or other war photos.

When I got to school, there were no lights on at all, very eerie. (I don't think I had ever seen the school with absolutely no lights on.) The school usually has a 24-hour guard on duty. I had tried to call ahead and no phones were working. So, there I was, in this war zone, looking south and seeing the smoke and, now, smelling it since the wind had shifted and was now blowing it north.

I started to walk home (north), this time walking part way up different streets (Sixth Avenue, Thompson, etc.) And got to Houston and Sixth. One last vignette that remains vivid. Houston was the street that really sealed off anyone except emergency personnel. There were hundreds of people wandering, really just standing around looking at each other, and occasionally talking softly. Just north of Houston on Sixth, on one side of the street were two huge (maybe 40-50 feet long) trucks unloading or loading construction vehicles of one sort or another, and on the other side of the street, a series of t.v. portable satellite dishes and power trucks set up and, literally 3-4 t.v. commentators (in at least three different languages—one was Japanese) doing “on-the-scene” interviews with the WTC site and smoke as a back-drop. The juxtaposition of these two activities with the people mingling amidst all of it was incredible.

Have to stop again . . . .

Larry

## Karen Gross

Professor

I have had a hard time writing about what happened on September 11th and the days and weeks that followed. It is not that I have nothing to say. Instead, I suspect it is that I have so much to say and so many feelings that I cannot get it down in any meaningful way. And, when I do commit words to screen (or paper), whatever I write seems trite and incomplete—truly inadequate on many levels. But, each time I set down to write, I keep coming back to writing about one twenty minute period on September 11th between 8:48 a.m. and 9:08 a.m. and how, during that time period, my mind was unwilling or unable to grasp what was happening. And, I keep returning to those minutes, hoping that I will see connections I failed to see before. But, I remain disappointed as, even now, I cannot fathom the unfathomable. For someone who makes her living making connections between seemingly unrelated events, seeing relationships between people and their needs and linking complex ideas, I was singularly unable to do so on the early morning of September 11th. So, what follows are some of my thoughts and feelings during a twenty minute period that is etched forever in my mind and, I suspect (albeit for vastly different reasons), that of many others.

I arrived at school early and was sitting at my desk preparing for my 9:15 a.m. bankruptcy class. I remember hearing a loud boom (my office faces what was the World Trade Center). I recollect thinking—without pausing long—that it must have been a subway mishap or a truck unceremoniously dumping its heavy contents or a construction accident at one of the many local construction sites. Something more serious—something at the WTC or something related to loss of human life—never entered my mind.

My phone then rang—a student reporting that he was stuck in the Holland Tunnel and would be late for class. He reported hearing on the radio that a small aircraft had apparently hit the WTC. I remember saying:” Don’t worry. Whenever you get to class is fine.” I did not link his call with what the boom I had heard only moments before. Never once did it strike me that I had heard a plane of any size hitting the WTC. Instead, I remember thinking how my attendance policy had

been so well indoctrinated into my students' minds that they called from their cars and cell phones when they were going to be late. I actually wondered if my policy was a bit "over the top." Class attendance is important, but how important?

Then, I heard another boom—much like the first. Odd, I remember thinking . . . another boom. Something must be happening in the subway; some construction site is really dropping debris; some truck is unloading a very heavy load. Not once did I link this second boom to the phone call. Not once did I even link it to the first boom. Not once did I think anything nefarious was happening. Not once did I think I or anyone else was in danger.

I walked down the stairs two flights to my class, books and notes in hand. I was ready to address the day's topic (as to which I had a number of thoughts including major objections to the way in which Congress and the courts were treating consumer debtors). I was ready to engage. I walked into the room and, save for one student sitting in the back corner, the room was completely empty—eerily empty. It was about 9:08 a.m. The lone student asked if he had missed some announcement about class cancellation. I said no. And I stared at the open seats. Even at that moment, I did not immediately link up the prior events—the first boom, the phone call, the second boom, the classroom vacancies. Even then, I did not realize that the world as I had known it had, forever, changed. I just stood uneasily in the empty space.

Of course, as everyone knows, the silence of those few moments were quickly replaced with chaos, students running in the classroom dazed and scared over what they had seen outside, people fleeing up West Broadway, the towers collapsing, the desperate efforts to reach loved ones, to help those in need, to find one's way home, to learn about what had happened, to wrestle with demons one didn't even know existed.

But, I cannot shake—no matter how much I now know about the events of that day—the fact that I could not then piece together what was happening in my world. I heard and experienced events as isolated, and I never once—not once—did I attribute my experiences to anything connected with terrorism or death or destruction. And those moments of silence in that virtually empty classroom—with me standing there, books in hand, ready to teach the students who were not there—still haunt me. I was ready to do that which I do and no one was

there and after that moment, neither teaching nor my life would ever be the same. In that space, with that silence, I heard the end of peace, safety, security, and calm as I had known them. To repeat a well-worn phrase—that silence was and remains deafening.

## Maggi Khalil

Class of 2005, evening division

I am terrified and remain disgusted at the horrid events that took place on Sept. 11. I got off the train on Church and Chambers street and began walking to 5 World Trade Center where I work when I immediately detected pandemonium in NY. People were crying, running and screaming but no one seemed to know what was going on. I looked up and discovered what looked like a small fire on the top of the WTC. I was a bit frightened but I continued to walk on Church St. towards work because I thought it was just a fire. I was scared and puzzled so I stopped to make a phone call to my boss but there was a line for the phone so I continued to walk. My cell phone wasn't working or any other pay phones I later encountered. At this point I was right downstairs contemplating whether or not to go upstairs to work. Then the second plane hit. I heard the massive explosion but even more terrorizing, was the fact that I felt the heat of the explosion on my face. It felt like I was in the middle of a fire for a few seconds. I took a second to pinch myself and see if I was still alive and when I determined that God had blessed me, I ran. I knew America was under attack and I began to run with the crowds to Canal St. I only stopped once when I heard people around me screaming louder than I thought was humanly possible. I turned around and I looked up to see people jumping off the sides of the building. I was paralyzed as I watched one, then two, then three people jump off the side of the building. I could not walk for a few minutes as I was in shock. I truly thought this was the end. But then I got myself together and I continued to run to the train station. I got on the A train and after 10 excruciating minutes of standing still, the train finally headed to Brooklyn and I thanked Jesus for saving me. I know that many

people had to walk home over the Brooklyn Bridge that horrendous day. I was lucky to leave the scene quickly with only a few scratches and an irregular heartbeat. When I arrived home, I must have received over a hundred calls that day from hysterical family members, friends and co-workers. Everyone I work with has a different story to tell but we are all happy to be alive. We are truly lucky, but more than luck, Americans are strong people who are well equipped for survival. It took a few weeks but I sleep through the night now.

## Justina Kingen

Class of 2004, day division

I have just realized how much my life changed in just a few days. On September 11, 2001, I walked down Worth St on my way to school. It was such a beautiful day; just a normal Tuesday morning, or so I thought. Just before I crossed the threshold from Chinatown to TriBeCa, I heard a very loud boom and looked up to see a huge cloud of smoke and dust erupt, as glittering debris trickled down. The smoke just kind of sat there behind the buildings that were blocking my view. I kept looking up and the glitter just kept trickling down almost like a random, out-of-season fireworks display. At that point my only thought was, "Hmm, this is interesting." As I continued walking, I saw a crowd of people gathering at the next intersection, they were peering in a southwesterly direction. As I approached the group, I looked to my left, curious about what all this smoke and glitter was about and there, directly in front of me, I watched several floors of 1 World Trade Center burn. An eerie, orange glow shot out of the windows, with smoke slowly rolling from behind, still that glitter filled the air. Then I thought, 'This is really something, this is serious business'. What I didn't quite get was how a bomb would make such an erratic pattern like that. I only paused for a moment and then kept walking. It was about 8:50am and I had Torts class at 9am. I quickly pulled out my phone and dialed my parents. How strange to see "Network Busy" flash across the screen of my cell phone. I kept moving in haste, didn't want to be late. Still I didn't know what had caused this tragedy. I



had to ask. A man standing about two blocks from NYLS told me a commercial airliner had gone off course and slammed into the north tower.

It seems crazy to me now, but I felt a bit better about the spectacle before my eyes right then. Maybe because it caused the hideous thought of a terrorist attack to sink down and nearly diminish. My mind raced, “Must have been a malfunction of the plane or maybe the pilot fell asleep or was high.” The arrangement of orange windows finally made sense. As I neared the corner of Worth and Church, I began to feel the loss; it wasn’t a scene in a virtual movie. There were lives lost on that plane and in that building. Tears slowly crept down my face. I didn’t know a single person in the building or on the misguided plane, but I truly felt a deep sense of empathy for the children, parents, and loved ones of the thousands of people that were being destroyed only 8 blocks away from me. I finally made it to Torts class. We listened to about 5 minutes of lecture on negligence as students were crying, leaving the class and walking back in. Then the whole world stopped as we heard the second boom. The eyes that I had successfully willed dry, were drowned again, I didn’t know for sure what that sound was; no one in our classroom did, but we all knew it was not good. “How can we focus on the class?” kept flashing through my mind. That sound surely indicated more lives lost. As Mayor Giuliani said, “. . . more lives than we can bear.” I looked at my cell phone in frustration; I had received text messages, but it was not receiving calls and I knew I probably could not make any. I immediately worried about my family and friends in Michigan who knew how nearby those towers were. At 9:30 class was dismissed and we all poured out onto the corner. It was then that we realized exactly what was going on, and it was much worse than we could have imagined. It was a total shock. Within an hour of the accident barricades of city workers and FBI agents were already in place, as fire trucks rushed to save lives, only to the despair of many. We safely watched 2 WTC crumble from inside NYLS on TV. Our eyes darted from the screen to the windows as we watched people run past our school covered in soot, ash, dust, and concrete away from danger.

As if those tragedies weren’t enough, we learned about what was going on in the rest of the U.S. It seemed as if we were in a time warp, it stood still, nothing seemed real, except for the fact that my phone refused to work and I wanted to call my family. We sat around the school for hours worrying about the rest of The

City and the country. Where were they heading next? If those planes could slip through the cracks, how do we know those evil people won't finish off the rest of the Financial District, or the whole city for that matter? I waited at the school until about 3pm and made sure that people who lived in New Jersey, Long Island, Brooklyn and Queens were sure that they could get home since the bridges and tunnels were closed. I offered a place to stay to my friends as well as students I didn't know when I overheard their worries. The fear in their eyes was incredulous and it softened when someone was kind enough to offer them a place to sleep besides the floor of the school. Police officers told us that pedestrians were allowed on the bridges and everyone began to leave, which was good since the building was evacuated not much longer afterward.

I walked with a group of my friends to the entrance of the Brooklyn Bridge. On the way there, a bunch of people had formed lines in the park at 1 Center St. waiting to donate blood. We couldn't risk taking a bus uptown and not have a way to get back downtown to get home, so we covered our faces with masks, and kept moving toward the Brooklyn Bridge. It was clear that pedestrians could get across, so I said good-bye to my friends and began my own journey home, little did I know that's exactly what it was. I had to walk at least 20 blocks out of my way to get to my neighborhood. It seemed as if every street I walked down had someone there to turn me away, and I wasn't even walking toward the disaster. It was unnerving to see all the shops and restaurants in Chinatown shut down. I'd never seen anything like it before. I was very glad I had gone to the DMV during my first week as a New York resident to get my new license because it would have been difficult to get home without it. I had to show it at several checkpoints to get back south. I heard an emergency worker say that 7 WTC had just fallen, I decided it was a good time to be home and call my parents. I watched CNN coverage of the day's events for a few hours since my home phone decided to quit working soon after that call. The next day, my roommate's friend came over to check on us. Was I glad to see him on the other side of the door! I felt so helpless. He came all the way from Queens no less. His cell phone worked and he was kind enough to let us make a few calls.

The next evening my roommate and his friend came back down from Queens to Chinatown and offered me a place to stay in Queens as well. I was very

reluctant. I didn't know his family at all and hated to impose on them. Then they reminded me that President Bush was going to be in town the next day and that sealed the deal. If the president might have been the target in the attack on the Pentagon and this city already got hit, it was the last place I wanted to be. In addition, although some businesses were reopened, they weren't getting deliveries, so fresh food was not easy to get and transportation was even more difficult for me living south of Canal Street. How gracious of this family to take in poor, homeless me. I got my own room and virtually free range of the common areas of the house. In normal circumstances I would not impose on a family that does not even know me, nor I them, but it seemed appropriate. The day the accident happened, I was offering my home to people without a second thought, simply worried about their well being; the same thoughtfulness was bestowed upon me.

To complicate my situation a bit, I had strep throat, but I was well taken care of in my time of deepest despair. I was ill, tired and homesick and they took me to the clinic and helped me get antibiotics, as well as a comfortable place to rest and comfort food. Who could ask for anymore?

I made it back home on Sunday, September 16. Then I found out that school didn't resume until September 24. My thoughts went to my family and friends back in Michigan that had left me multiple messages and missed me so much. I spoke with friends and family, asking them what they thought of me catching a flight. With a bit of hesitation, they agreed it was likely a safe time to fly after the tragedies that just happened, security would be in full force.

At this very moment, I'm sitting on an airplane heading toward Detroit. I've just read 4 magazines covering the events of the previous week and I marvel at how well the writers have captured the current energy of Manhattan. Although I am the first to admit this probably wasn't the best time ever to move to New York City and start law school, I don't regret it. This tragedy has truly affected me in many ways and now I recognize them more clearly. I tend to think about the here and now and appreciate things more. What do I really want out of life, what is really important? We've all experienced it first hand, maybe all of us didn't see chunks of a building flying in our direction, but this has affected everyone in this city directly. Lives lost, communications lost, transportation disrupted, even loss of security in things we've believed for so long were absolute. Now our faith,

generosity, and dependence on others have grown. Yes, New York City is a family now; the rest of the world is just watching the movie. The tragedy is that this movie is real. My only regret is that I didn't do much to help, however, others reached out to me when I didn't know how real my need was and I'm truly thankful for that. I only fear that my gratitude was not expressed enough. Could it ever be?

Thank you God that I'm here to tell about it, help me to have a chance to show my gratitude by helping others. Help me to find better ways to show my appreciation to those that helped me.

## Diana Leo

Senior Director, Office of Institutional Advancement

Before the sight was the sound. Sirens, bells, brakes. Airplanes and helicopters. From every direction. A really bad fire I thought. My first impression was confirmed as I turned with West Broadway and saw the heavy, black cloud pouring into the sky. But then . . . then . . . I saw the hole—a jagged wound in the Tower, and I realized there were people all over the streets, looking up, hands over mouths, arms around each other, strangers comforting strangers.

I hurry over to a young man and ask what happened.

"A plane," he says. He has little to no affect. "It went straight into the building."

"My God," I say. "The pilot must have had a heart attack. Oh, those poor people on the plane." "It looked like it was aiming for the building."

"That's impossible," says a woman standing nearby. "It had to be an accident."

The young man is still emotionless. "I saw it. I was looking up because it sounded like the plane was flying way too low, and it went around that building and straight into the Tower. It wasn't an accident."

I notice that a number of people from the School are among those at the corner of Worth and West Broadway, where I am standing. We are silent, staring. Then the world falls apart.

From our vantage, we can't see the plane; we can only see the enormous ball of fire that results when it crashes into the second tower. One woman starts crying hysterically. I look at it and repeat "Oh my God. Oh my God." What we all now know is that it is not an accident.

The Twin Towers now have twin holes. I am watching people trapped above the fire and I am watching people jump to certain death. I suspend all sense of belief so that I do not run shrieking from the place.

Then I see Suzanne and Trish across the street and I run over to them. Trish is crying hysterically and Suzanne explains that her brother works at the WTC and she can't reach him on his phone. I don't know it then but the name of his company is Cantor Fitzgerald.

I ask Suzanne where the rest of our office is and she tells me that everyone left the building and is at Church and Worth. We guide the weeping Trish with us and hook up with the others. We hug as if we had been separated for years. Barbara and Laurie aren't there, but I see them coming across the street.

Cell phones are useless. Trish and Suzanne go off to try to reach Trish's mother. People are amazingly calm and orderly. There are long lines waiting to use the pay phone on the corner. I am desperate to call Jane and tell her I'm alright and Barbara is frantic because her friend Maxine works on the 36th floor of One World Trade Center. We locate a phone in the School and start making calls: my mother, Jane, my son's nanny Estella to tell her that something is happening and to keep him in all day (as usual, Estella is way ahead of me, and even though we live on the Upper West Side, she has already determined that they will not leave the house).

It's hard to distinguish between rumors and facts. There are eight hijacked planes and only four are accounted for; the Pentagon and White House have been attacked; every federal building in the nation has been evacuated (I think of Ward working around the corner at One Federal Plaza and I panic, but realize I'll never find him in all this).

Rick is trying to get us all to assemble in the Stiefel Room. Some just want to get away, others are afraid to leave. I just want to get home. Barbara and I and others from our office do meet in the Stiefel Room. No one knows where Trish and Suzanne are, and Ed goes in search of them. A small TV in an office confirms

the Pentagon was hit, but the White House wasn't. Barbara still can't reach anyone who has heard from Maxine. She is growing paler by the moment.

We go up to the Dean's office on the second floor. Rick is working hard to plan next steps—then we hear—what? A rumble? A bellow? Is the building shaking? We run to the windows and someone says, "Oh my God, it's collapsing," and I look out and there is nothing but a huge cloud of white smoke and one tower. The sense of disbelief has numbed every neuron by this time. I even think some nonsense about not being able to say Twin Towers but only Twin Tower, but is that a contradiction in terms, but thank God I do retain enough of a sense of reality not to say any of this out loud.

Barbara has finally reached Maxine who in fact was in the building and got out in time to watch it collapse as she ran the entire way to her home in the Village. We have to go, I tell her and everyone has had enough. The mayor is in the street telling people to go north and we collect two of our staff who live outside Manhattan and walk to Church Street. The other tower collapses.

People are incredibly calm. They are walking or running but no one is pushing, jostling, or yelling. We stand at the corner and begin to walk north, but I realize our path will take us directly past the Empire State Building and into midtown and I am afraid to go that way. So we go west to the west side highway. "There's nothing there," I say to the others. "I think that's safest." Is this happening? When did I learn to think this way?

Of course, I am wearing the shoes least fit for walking, but on the other hand, I did not expect to be walking to 106th Street when I set out that morning. The west side highway is surreal. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people fleeing north, with the huge clouds—the remainders of the Towers—pursuing us. There is no traffic but the Chelsea Piers are lined with emergency vehicles. We see a man in a white shirt, covered in dust, bleeding, being led by a friend. The man says, over and over again, "I have to see my sister . . . I have to see my sister." I hope he finds her.

The four of us are encouraging each other, but it is hard going. At about 40th Street, a police officer is telling everyone to go faster. I go over and ask him why and he tells us there is a danger of gas leaks. We break into a run and I am looking over my shoulder with almost every step, fully expecting that explosions will be

the next—or perhaps the last—horror of this day. I don't get it until days later, but at that moment, I believed it very possible that I would die.

Barbara is afraid to stay on the highway so we head for 11th Avenue. She sees a young man getting into an SUV and asks him where he's going. We later find out that he's a FedEx employee and his name is Sam, but at that moment all we know is that maybe he can get us out of there. Sam says, "I don't know where I'm going." Barbara asks if he can take us uptown, but the four of us have already climbed into the van. "Sure," he says; we head north and get back on the highway at 55th Street. There is absolutely no traffic. Sam drives us to 104th Street. We ask if he wants to come up to Barbara's apartment, but he asks only that we call his wife in New Jersey and tell her he's okay. "You guys gave me some direction," Sam says. "I didn't know where to go or what to do, but I'll go stay with my friend on 112th Street. I just couldn't think of it." And Sam, our rescuer, is gone.

I walk the two blocks from Barbara's house to my own. It is sunny and quiet on Broadway. I am walking in another country. People are in shock, radios are blaring, but still, it's another country. Dogs are being walked, babies are being pushed in strollers and the air has not yet been tainted this far uptown.

I turn the key in my door, walk in, hug Estella. I call Jane and tell her I made it home. I call Ward and leave a message. I pick up the baby and hold him tight.

## Arthur S. Leonard

Professor

On September 11, I got on the IRT local subway train at 72nd Street and Broadway at about 8:45 a.m., intending to ride down to the Cortland Street (World Trade Center) stop, in order to buy stamps at the Post Office on Church Street across from the Trade Center on my way in to school. The local train seemed very slow, stopping between stations, and finally an announcement was made at the 28th Street station that due to "police activity" at the World Trade Center the service was stopped all along the line. Figuring that on this nice late summer day I could easily walk to school from 28th Street, I went up to the street and started walking down 7th Avenue.

Then I noticed that the World Trade Center towers, which were directly in my line of view down 7th Avenue, had thick, gray smoke billowing upwards. I also noticed that radios were blaring news reports from cars along the street, and people were clustered at the cars listening. I listened in and learned about the planes having crashed into the Trade Towers, as well as the rumor that a plane had crashed into a building in Washington and that there were others heading who knows where.

I continued walking down 7th Avenue, listening to random bits of radio reports as I did so. The street was filling with people staring southward. As I got to 12th Street, I saw that St. Vincent's Hospital seemed to be in emergency mode. Police officers had blocked traffic from the street, and medical personnel were standing on the sidewalk with gurneys as if waiting to receive patients. The crowds along the sidewalks got thicker as I proceeded south, spilling onto the streets, as the police had stopped all the traffic south on 7th Avenue below St. Vincent's, presumably to allow speedy access to the hospital from the south. I was further south in the Village when I saw the collapse of WTC2. I was still too far away actually to hear the collapse, but I will never forget the collective gasp that came from the hundreds of people on the sidewalks and the street looking south as the tower seemed to collapse in on itself, a burst of dust and debris shooting out in all directions. I continued walking south until I saw the second tower, WTC1, collapse. Actually, the smoke and debris was still so thick from the first tower collapsing that the second was more sensed than seen, from my vantage point—another burst of dust and debris coming out of the first cloud.

By that time, people in the street were screaming and crying and pointing wildly. Although the radio reports were still quite fragmentary, many on the street assumed that this was the work of terrorists, likely of Middle Eastern background, and some were calling for bombing Iraq and other countries known to harbor terrorists.

My own feelings as I was walking south, sort of on automatic pilot at this point, are hard to recall or describe. I know I had a feeling of being stunned by what I had seen, feeling a cold hollow sensation in the pit of my stomach. I kept thinking about how many people might have been in those towers as they were collapsing, the incredible pain and loss of life that was represented by those



distance clouds of dust. Finally, as I was getting below Sheridan Square towards Houston Street, I concluded that it was pointless to continue southward, that an event of this magnitude would undoubtedly cause law enforcement authorities to evacuate the whole area and bar access, so I headed back north and walked home. (It was a very long walk, about two hours, but there were no trains, I saw no buses heading north, and every cab I saw was packed.)

By coincidence, my students in Contracts (Evening Section) had their first writing assignment due that night, and many of them had been submitting the assignment in advance by email. I have my school email programmed to forward all messages automatically to my AOL account. Luckily, before the school's server went down as electricity failed later in the afternoon, a fair number of my students' assignments had been forwarded to my AOL account, and I was able to access those at home that evening. I had learned from TV news that the area below Canal Street was now sealed off and evacuated and largely without power.

As soon as I got home, the television went on, and I watched the unfolding story. By early in the evening, I couldn't take any more. Seeking some sort of consolation, I put on a recording of the German Requiem by Johannes Brahms, which helped me get through the evening. (Ironically, the same choice occurred to Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic, who changed their opening night program the following Thursday night, to the Brahms Requiem in place of the previously-announced program. The Philharmonic had been in Europe on tour on September 11, and was delayed coming back to prepare for the opening of the new season by the President's closure of all airports for several days.)

I received a telephone call from Joan Fishman, the Associate Dean for Special Projects, seeking my non-NYLS email address, as she was attempting to assemble an email distribution list to communicate with faculty, and was enlisting our help in getting word out to students that the school was closed and would not reopen until after the scheduled Rosh Hashana holiday closing the following Wednesday. Because of the forwarded email messages I had from students, I was able to relay that information to at least those of my students who had sent email, and evidently word spread from there as I began to receive email messages from other students as well, some submitting their papers, some talking about the events of the week, and a few sharing their own dramatic escapes from danger. Keeping

this line of communication open was quite precious for me, and I think for many of the students as well. I just wish that I had a list at home of everybody’s non-NYLS email addresses. That goes on the “to do” list for many of us.

This was certainly an unforgettable event. I don’t think I will ever forget that collective gasp from the crowd lining 7th Avenue in the Village as the towers collapsed, and then angry shouts and cries that followed. And I won’t forget the strange feeling of the crowds as I walked northwards towards home. The unusual restraint of drivers and people on the street, the grim looks on faces, the clusters of people around parked cars listening to radio broadcasts. There was a sense, albeit unspoken, of solidarity, of all being in something new and terrifying together and not quite knowing what it was. And then the enforced idleness over the ensuing days, with the area of the school off-limits, and my own inability to concentrate long enough to get any real work done. I read fiction, listened to lots of music, and made several failed attempts to do work-related reading or writing. It wasn’t until the next week, and especially the Rosh Hashana services I attended and a holiday dinner with relatives on the Upper East Side after services that Monday night, Sept. 17, that I began to feel some return to more normal functioning, which was helped tremendously by being able to come back to school later in the week, even without phones and email, and to reconnect with longtime colleagues and friends.

## Edward Lora

Stewardship Associate, Office of Institutional Advancement

I watched helplessly along with my coworkers as the first tower fell. I knew that some of the Marines I drill with every month must have been working there as firemen or police officers. I called my company gunnery sergeant, not knowing that he would later die in the towers doing his job. I later tried calling my unit, but all phone lines were down. The Law School was dismissed by the dean, so I walked with the masses towards home and packed my military gear. The next morning I was in my drill center in Amityville, New York, guarding our gates. We were all waiting for the call to depart—either to the Trade Center site or to the

Middle East. Neither call came. The National Guard received the call instead. One of the units attached to mine has been deployed to Europe and ours may be the next to go. We are currently on standby. In the meantime I have been attending funerals of those who fell on 9/11.

## Kitty MacLeod

Director, Business Operations

I was sitting in my car, driving toward the Brooklyn Bridge as I do every morning. At about 9:15am, I turned on the radio and could not believe what I was hearing. I changed the station, but the words were the same. From Hicks Street I could see the dark plumes of smoke rising from the towers. Then another jet crashes into the Pentagon. The isolation, grief and sadness were overwhelming as I listened in disbelief to a newscaster saying, “Oh, my God! Oh, My God! The tower is collapsing.” I will never forget those words. Amidst tears and uncontrollable sobs, my thoughts and prayers went to my family and coworkers, wondering what was happening and if everyone was OK. My stepson worked in Tower 7. The story continued to unfold with the collapse of the twin and yet another jet crashing to the ground in Pennsylvania! How could this be happening? What was yet to come? It wasn’t until Noon that I was able to communicate my whereabouts to my husband and discovered that my stepson was safe at home. How many thousands will never hear these words? “I’m here! I’m safe!” I finally arrived home around 1:30pm. Around 3:00pm, my husband and I noticed debris floating through the sky, some of it drifting and settling in our yard—some of it in shreds and some of it amazingly untouched—yet another grim reminder of the death and destruction caused by such incomprehensible evil and hatred. I still ask myself the same questions, over and over again: how can anyone have that much hatred in his/her heart? I still have no answer. How can anyone believe in a God that demands the destruction of the innocent? How can anyone believe in a God that demands the suicidal death of his followers? To what end? To what purpose? I still have no answers. This is surely not a God that any decent person would want to know.

## Richard A. Matasar

Dean and Professor

Colleagues, I have been asked by the editors of the *L* for my thoughts concerning September 11th and its aftermath. This is not an easy assignment, because so much has transpired, so many individual stories of tragedy and heroism have been told, many speeches have been given, and so much news has been delivered that I am unsure that any of us can articulate coherently any longer what these events mean. Nonetheless, I will share with you my thoughts—unconnected, perhaps incoherent, but deeply personal—about these events.

September 11th. Sitting in my office, I heard a plane, flying too low overhead. I heard an explosion. A plane crash? In Manhattan? Any injuries?

Phones are ringing. A plane has crashed into the Trade Center. Panic on the streets. Are our students ok? Can they get here? Can they get home? Let's assess the situation, calm down the panic in our home.

It's only been a few minutes, but it's clear. School is over for the day (and how many thereafter). We need to get people out of class and home before transportation is impossible. We need to clear the streets of our students. Too many of us are standing on W. Broadway, just looking, looking and soon experiencing more than anyone would want. A second plane, an explosion, the feeling of heat, debris falling. Get back to the law school, get our students, faculty, and staff to safety. Should we go home? Should we stay? The police have made it plain: do not leave unless there is someplace to go. Transportation is down. The Towers are down. Other planes are in the air. The cloud is coming down Church Street. People are running. They are covered in suit.

We have students who work in the Towers. Are they ok? What about our commuters? What about the fire fighters, police, and emergency workers who are our students? Where can we go to help? To give blood?

Let's come together. If we meet and discuss, we can be calm. Let's get food into the hands of our community. Let's watch the news unfold together. Let's get word out on the Web. Let's get home before the day is out, and if we can't let's stay here together.

It's 4:30, almost everyone has found a way home. Faculty, staff, and students riding together, walking together, comforting each other. Our power is out. Our phones are out. We need to close it down. 6:00—nothing more we can do here. All students have now left. It's time to start rebuilding, helping if we can.

It's night. How will we reach each other? How can we tell those who care that we are alive and well (and how can we find out who we have lost)? Gotta be in touch by phone, by e-mail, by Web. Gotta meet. Gotta get the school open once again—soon. Can we get “back to normal?” Sleep. Not soon enough. Tomorrow is a new day and we begin a new.

No one will forget September 11th. But, no one should forget what has happened since. Our law school has come together as never before. Through non-stop efforts we found each other, alive and well. We have given each other comfort, grieved for our lost family and friends, resumed our studies, and continued to confront a new reality.

Our beloved neighborhood is still shaken. Fires burn and we have a daily reminder of destruction very close to us. We are sometimes very uncomfortable. It's hot and hard to breathe. But, here we are, back at school, now at war. And, we are confronting the critical questions that remain.

What will happen next? Will we ever be safe again? Why are we studying to be lawyers, who care about fairness and rules, if so many around us are unconcerned about the lives of others and define justice in ways to justify the killing of innocent people?

I remain convinced that our very presence at New York Law School defines the greatness of our commitment to law. In spite of the tragedy that we have witnessed, the losses we have suffered, and the difficult times we will confront, we are here. We are committed to asking the toughest questions: have the policies of our country contributed to the madness that has engulfed the world? Can we afford liberty if it diminishes our personal safety? Can we be an open society, freely available to citizens of the world? Will we forge new relationships with new nation states and still maintain our commitments to others? Will we be able to use law to help those in pain, to bring resources to those who have suffered financial loss, to help people reconstruct their lives?

The law is our tool to answer these questions. Legal study is our weapon in

fighting for what we believe and against the things we oppose. Where the law falls short, we must be informed sufficiently to hold our leaders accountable, to advocate for change if they are wrong, and to support them when they decide.

These are patriotic times, but patriotism means more than unthinking support. Now is the time for all of us at New York Law School to build our portfolio of talents and knowledge—to ensure our commitment to the rule of law, to gain understanding of conflict, to learn about dispute resolution, to obtain the skill to help those in need, and to give us hope that the future will bring structure and coherence once again in our complicated world.

## MaryRose Mercieca

Administrative Assistant, Human Resources

In the summer of 1973 I came for the first time in my life to my beloved America. New York City, the place I always loved and dreamed of since I was first born. My father worked in New York City, and very early, as long as I could remember, America was a magical place, a place to hold a warm, loving, and exciting touch in my heart, where my father worked hard and raised his children with generosity and lovely gifts we were blessed with constantly. In those years we were among the few to be raised in America's clothing and play with the latest dolls and toys father always sent us. So I always said to my grandmas when I grew up I am going to America. So I was now in 1973 in New York City for the first time. My father took me all over: the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, Ellis Island, Macy's, Alexander's, Lerner's, among others, the 42nd Street shows, 42nd Street Library. We saw the 4th of July Macy's fireworks, the FDR Drive, East River, Central Park, Times Square, of course different beaches. I went through it all. But, the only place I could remember in detail on my first visit to America that left a lasting expression is and was the World Trade Center.

My father told me he was taking me to see the now tallest building in New York City, taller than the Empire State Building. I went downtown with my father to his office at Nassau Street and Fulton. He stopped by to check on things, being

that he was taking vacation time for his daughter to introduce me to the wonderful city of New York. Finally (I could not wait till we left his office). We came out and as we turned towards Fulton my father said, “Do you see the World Trade Center? Look!” I looked sideways and for a few minutes I thought my father was up to his jokes and I said “Pa, are you joking again, are you saying that this is not real that there are no tallest Twin Towers and that you made this up? My father laughed. He said, no I am not joking, look up. So as I looked up (something I was not used to) in the middle, high, graceful and wonderful, I for the first time in my early teenage life saw the World Trade Center. So tall mighty and powerful. I stopped in my walk and just observed them letting my eyes take it all. “Oh how beautiful,” I said, “oh how tall they are going and penetrating into the sky.” My father was amused at my reaction and I asked him are they far from where we are. My father assured me that they were around the corner a few blocks away. We were still at Fulton walking towards Broadway. I felt like my feet could not carry me fast enough and I said “Pa come on let’s run” and I lightly touched my father’s arm and started to run towards the World Trade Center. My father still amused by me at this wonder said no we can not run, you are not in Malta. I saw some people observing I was ready to run and I patiently started to walk quickly, as quickly as my feet could take me. We turned on John Street off-Broadway toward Church Street and my eyes were still following or looking for the World Trade Center. As we came to Church Street for the first time I was able to have the full view of “The Twins” so very tall and wonderful and powerful. In some parts there still were iron around them for the finishing and as my father explained we were going to the basement to shop and soon in a few weeks the building was to be fully operational. We were now inside the Twins and I felt like now I was a part of the World Trade Center. To me the ending of the World Trade Center sadly and ironically was very much the same closure of that one Summer Day in 1973.

On September 11, 2001, at 7: 30 AM I was at Nassau Street at the gym. At 8:30 AM I was getting ready to leave the gym on my way to Church Street’s Post office. As I crossed the street off Broadway/Nassau walking towards the World Trade Center approximately 8:40 AM I was thinking what a beautiful sunny day it is. I was feeling good that day and it was a perfect day, almost a summer’s day, only not humid or hot. I almost stopped as I turned on Church Street by the fruit

vendor, but I saw a line and people were buying fruit, others across the street were buying their coffee and bagels etc. from the street vendors so I kept on walking and crossed the street to the post office only seconds before the first plane hit the North Tower. We did not hear the first plane hit in the post office. When the mail clerk gave me the stamp as I was putting the stamp on my letter I saw him closing the window. I looked and watched him close and I thought it is too early to close. I wondered if he needed to get something and closed for a few minutes. There still people with their packages on line. But I went and dropped my letter. As I was dropping my letter my attention was caught at an unusual sigh; the people on line were returning still in line towards the entrance of the post office with their packages. I asked them why are you leaving? A woman said, they are saying there is a fire. I started towards the entrance also to leave. At the same time I heard a noise, pounding loud noise from upstairs. People were leaving and an agitated loud man's voice addressing the security guard in the building next to the hallway of the post office. I realized this was serious, but we could not make out what the man was saying. He was loud and too agitated. Before I managed to get to the street I heard fire engines and police cars whistling and saw them passing the post office. I felt a panic as I finally got to the door. I quickly looked up to see if there were any traces of smoke. I instead saw what looked like confetti (small tiny glittering pieces of glass high in the clear sky moving with the breeze towards the east). I wondered what was it that I was seeing and I did not make sense of what I was seeing. As far as I know there wasn't any Yankee or other parades that day. I only was aware of everything around me. We now as we were safely outside the post office started asking each other what happened, what happened. A woman said someone mentioned a bomb and we said a bomb, where? She said I do not know. Another woman started to cry and took her cell phone to make a call, as someone said they are saying in the World Trade. I said no, not the World Trade, they have to be crazy whoever it is. Now I started to cross the street to the east side from the post office. As I went up the sidewalk I quickly turned my face towards the World Trade Center not ready for the heart breaking sight of the North Tower. I gasped. Oh, I said, the World Trade Center. I now in contrast of years back watched in shock and disbelief the huge opening where the first plane had penetrated. It was fire



being blown towards the east, as it was burning. I just looked thinking this is more than a fire. A fire does not cause such a wide cave like opening. I asked the two men beside me that were watching like everybody else what happened? They too did not know. I saw another man and a women leaning against the wall and I asked them. Do you know what happened? The man said a plane went inside the World Trade Center. Who would have imagined such a horrible thing? I asked him if he said a plane went inside he World Trade center. He said it could have had engine trouble. How it started the horrible events of that September 11th morning. The young women was shaking. She said she was a tourist from Germany and that she was in the World Trade Center on her way to the observation desk but one of the elevators was under inspection and she was told to go and come back in a few minutes. How lucky was that. Is it fate that she was spared from death! The man said to her, I do not think you will make it to the observation desk today.

As we were observing and as all New Yorkers came together and talked like never before, as we looked at this wounded sight of the north Tower I was concerned with the flickering of the fire burning and I was hoping that it would not reach the second tower, the southern one. As I was watching I saw a second plane coming towards the North Tower, coming very close and without any question it was observing the damage of the tower. I did not realize that this same plane would be the second plane that penetrated the lower side of the South Tower. As the plane came around the Northern Tower, I thought a passenger plane noticed something horrible happened to the World Trade Center and was taking a few moments like we were all doing. (Days later I realized what I had seen was the evil eye of those barbarians terrorists watching and possibly making its target on the second tower as low as they possibly could hit to bring the World Trade Center down.) Then it turned back towards the south. Three days or so later, I was told by eye witnesses from Battery Park and from the Staten Island Ferry that they saw the second passenger plane coming from the WTC towards the Statue of Liberty. It then took aim towards the second tower, went sideways for a long time and very low towards the second tower. I did not see the second plane hit the WTC because all of a sudden three women were coming towards us talking very loud and the middle young women was saying I want to get out of here, I

want to get out, and they started pushing us. The man beside me got upset and asked why are you pushing. They put their hands on all of us. And I said Miss there is no reason for you to push, there is not a crowd here. So being that I was also pushed I started thinking that it might be better to move on, now people might push, and I wanted to go to work at New York Law School. So I started to walk towards NYLS. As I was on the south side of Reade Street across the French Deli before I crossed the street I all of a sudden heard a loud solid explosion with the OH. . . OH. . . sound of fuel. I instinctively started to run. People were running. I looked back and saw a huge cloud of smoke. I panicked and I ran trying to cross the street. To my horror a cab stopped to let out a woman passenger and blocked my way. The door of the cab was still open when the cab driver with the woman passenger calling out her companion still sitting in the front seat of the cab took off on hearing the horrible sound of the explosion. Now I could cross the street. I was grateful that my way was not blocked anymore. As I crossed over a man looking at my direction stopped me. This older man about 58 years stopped me and told me, “Miss, Miss you know where you were standing across the street before you started to run. Debris has fallen from the World Trade and it fell where you were standing a moment ago.” I urged the man to go on and move away, which he did. He said I am all right. I was still in shock and I said God, so many people have died today. I pictured those victims, the faces, mother’s sons. I thought of my own now teenage sons and I started to cry uncontrollably. How dreadful for those parents whose children have died. I wept for them and for America’s children our children. I had run towards the World Trade Center with joy when I was first introduced to them. Now years later I was heartbroken, weeping, and running away from the horror and pain of the World Trade Center, of NYC, my city, where terrorists have taken away and destroyed forever my wonderful powerful sight of the Twin Towers. I have realized I was there for their closure like I was meant to see and be with the moment in history as one family, my family that came together, as families do in moments of grief and sorrow.

## Bill Mills

Associate Librarian and Adjunct Professor

I was driving to work over the Brooklyn Bridge, as I usually do. I live in Park Slope, Brooklyn; and on Tuesday mornings before driving into Manhattan I first drive a car pool that includes my younger daughter and several of her classmates down to school in Bay Ridge. Sometimes the kids emerge from their houses late, so I like to have my cell phone with me if I need to call them from the car. On Tuesday the 11th I absent-mindedly walked out of the house without my cell phone, thought twice, and then went back in and got it, despite the bother.

So I'd gotten out of Bay Ridge, and was making pretty good time, driving across that beautiful Brooklyn Bridge in the left-hand lane. An ambulance came up behind me, and I squeezed into the middle lane. Then I wanted to squeeze back left to get across fast in the ambulance's wake. All this was very rote; driving maneuvers I'd done a thousand times. The day was warm, and so I had the air conditioner on and the windows up. It was pretty noisy outside, too, what with the traffic and the ambulance having just gone by. I recall having heard a booming sound that seemed to have come from somewhere behind me on the bridge, but not having thought anything of it. You hear booming sounds all the time.

I was driving down the ramp from the bridge, still heading west before it curved north toward Centre Street. Then the cars in front of me stopped. This wasn't unusual. Cars stop in front of you all the time. We stood a moment. And then I noticed that the guy in front of me had gotten out of his car and was standing in the roadway looking up. Automatically I looked up, and saw the north tower on fire. It must have happened just the moment before. It looked as though 15 or 20 floors were all on fire, up near the top, facing me. I thought it must have been a bomb. I also remember seeing thousands and thousands of pieces of paper drifting in the wind towards Brooklyn, like some bizarre tickertape parade.

I didn't want to get out of my car; I was still heading for work. My first impulse was to grab my cell phone and call my wife, who was working a late schedule that day, and thus still at home in Brooklyn. I called her and told her what was happening; to put on the TV; told her that I was all right and was heading to work.

I felt grateful that I'd brought the cell phone. This was obviously terrible; a bomb in the Trade Center; a big fire; but still no reason not to go to work.

The guy in front of me had gotten back in his car, and we were driving up Centre Street, through Foley Square, and left on Worth Street. All over, ambulances and police cars were suddenly starting up their sirens, lurching forth, heading south. As I approached Broadway I noticed groups of people standing in the street, looking south. Some were still electioneering on that Primary Day. Some were already crying.

I got to the NYLS parking lot, and drove in as usual. The best view of the Trade Center is from West Broadway, so I walked half a block over and stood on the northwest corner with a few dozen other people. We were about eight blocks north of the Trade Center. Joyce Saltalamachia and Carlin Meyer were already on that corner. Rick Matasar came up right behind me. We were transfixed. The north tower was still on fire. Somebody was saying that a plane had hit the building. How stupid. From that vantage, I really don't remember seeing anything gruesome. The only detail I could make out was that, in the fire, the tower was shedding little pieces of its silver skin. Rationally, I knew that people must be dying up there, but I briefly felt disembodied from what was happening before my eyes, thinking about things like how many months it would take to clean up the mess. We stood that way for several minutes.

Next the second explosion happened. The sound of it was less disturbing than the big ball of fire that suddenly burst from the south tower in a strange and inappropriate place. Viewing this all from the north, I never even saw a plane. My distress was fed by my confusion at the lack of an apparent connection between the first fire and the second explosion. But now I knew that this was really terrible. It was time to stop standing there looking, and to go to work. Rick and Joyce and Carlin and I turned back down Worth Street. And that was the last I ever saw of the World Trade Center.

I grew up in New York, and I've spent my whole life here. I'd never liked the World Trade Center, and I was not alone. When I was a kid the Empire State Building was very important to me, not so much for its obvious beauty but for its status as the tallest building in the world, here in my city. I felt cheated when they started building taller buildings in other cities. Then when they started building

taller towers right here in New York, not one but two, I felt that these structures could never be as great as my dear Empire State. It's funny how you hold a grudge, but that's how I felt. Of course, by the time they built the Trade Center I was nearly 20, so I had to find an intellectually mature reason for disliking it, and this wasn't hard to do. Architecture critics panned it as sterile and insipid. Most New Yorkers gave it some lip service, and then went about their business as though it weren't much of a big deal. A tourist trap. In my heart I was glad. But in my heart I'll always be grateful that I didn't see those towers fall.

We rushed back into the Law School, and started doing the administrative business that we're paid to do. Classes were in session, and could proceed to their end, but then classes were cancelled. The buildings would close immediately, but would remain open for anybody who didn't have somewhere else to go. My job was to go to the Library, and let everybody know these things. It wasn't much of a job. Word of the disaster had apparently spread, and nearly everybody had left, either going south, to watch what was going on, or north, to get away. There were still three students in the basement, two calm, one visibly disturbed. There were also a handful of Library staff who had arrived before 9 a.m. I told them what little there was to tell, and then went back into my office and called my older daughter in Italy to tell her I was all right. I got right through. Next I carried my little radio out to the Reference Desk. News radio 1010 WINS was just about the only station still broadcasting, but it was enough.

Joe Molinari and I stood at the Reference Desk, a familiar post, and answered the phones. 1010 WINS kept us up-to-date as things grew worse and worse. About a dozen Library staff hadn't shown up, and in my mind I kept going over their routes to work. I couldn't think of anybody who would have been coming from the south. But you never know. Over the next several hours, we got calls from all our staff, most of whom had been turned around or stuck in one form of public transportation or another. At one point, as things got more chaotic outside, the phone rang and it was Ping Tian, our new circulation librarian, calling from the pay phone on Leonard Street. On the verge of hysteria, she said that she was trying to get to work but wasn't being allowed into the building. I walked over to the Church Street doors, and we let her in. The Library Reference Desk didn't provide much of a vantage for watching the terror unfold. You only get a

dim view of Church Street through two sets of tinted doors and windows. As the day wore on, I could see a steady stream of people walking north. Nobody was running, and there was little panic that I could discern. I guess when people got north of Worth Street they figured they were OK. 1010 WINS kept going, but once again I began to feel disembodied, as if the disaster itself could have been happening in some other city. The NYLS security guards were warning us that somebody might try and break through the Church Street doors, but I didn't see why that would happen. It seemed much safer to stay put in my familiar, low-rise building than to try to go anywhere else. I never felt afraid, only mournful.

That morning the Library hosted several police and a busload of E.M.S. workers, who needed to use our restrooms and our phones, all of which still worked impeccably. At one point, a couple of reporters from CNN came in and started making phone calls to their office from our Reference Desk. We overheard one of them tell the person on the other end of the line that he was at NYU Law School. We quickly corrected him. The other reporter then recalled that his father had gone to school here at NYLS.

As that terrible morning turned to afternoon, those of us left in the Library began to wonder if we were serving any purpose in staying. We'd heard from all our staff. The Church Street exodus had slowed to a trickle, and the streets outside seemed relatively safe. Manhattan, we'd heard, was sealed south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street. The Library was empty, save for Joyce and the handful of other staff who had stayed on. Our security guards were capable of letting in emergency workers, as needs be. At about 2 p.m. I packed up and left. My plan was to walk back over the Brooklyn Bridge, and all the way home to Park Slope if necessary. I expected the bridge's footpath to be very crowded, its being one of the few routes out of Manhattan. I was in for a rude surprise.

Walking back over the Brooklyn Bridge was the saddest part. Quite contrary to what I'd expected, I was nearly alone. There were a few people walking *toward* Manhattan, some taking pictures. A very few police, and a couple of emergency vehicles on the roadway below. Some boats moving languidly down the river. The Trade Center ruins belching smoke from behind me. It felt so terribly lonely. My city had had its guts ripped out and exposed to the world. I walked back into downtown Brooklyn and took the subway the rest of the way home.

## Lisa Ornest

Class of 2004, day division

### *Between Six and Seven Thousand*

One theme of the day was unreality. This may have had something to do with the elision of the line between entertainment and life, but I think it has more to do with shock, the way the mind protects itself when events threaten to breach the limits of what it can bear. Another theme was increments, how each thing that happened seemed like it would be the last, and wasn't.

At about ten to nine, on the morning of September 11, I was on the Q train, which was stopped on the Manhattan Bridge. Someone yelled, "Oh my god," but I kept reading. Then he yelled, "Look at the World Trade Center," and I looked. You know what I saw. The top fifth of Tower Two was on fire, giant lashings of flame eating away the outer walls. I didn't doubt the evidence of my senses, but the logic wouldn't compute. How could a fire (which must have begun how? in someone's waste basket?) in a modern New York City office building, have been allowed to get to such a state? And how were the people above going to get out? And would they evacuate the other building as well? And thank god I hadn't taken the express bus that morning, like I usually do, or I would be sitting on Church and Cortland Streets right now, in the middle of the sirens and the screams. Up on the bridge it was peaceful. It was strange not to see streams of water, from hoses, like in a regular fire. The woman next to me said she had no idea how they battled a fire at that height, and I didn't either.

I know now. Here's how: Against instinct, common sense and reason; against the tide of calm but determined humanity winding its way down the dizzying infinite stairwells to oxygen and to life, without a second thought, fire fighters ascended.

By nine o'clock I was walking south on Broadway from Canal. The towers and the fire blocked the sky. Streams of refugees were already scurrying north, and I couldn't help thinking: Godzilla. I kept on. The catastrophe would be contained, and life would continue. My walkman had lost reception, and I bent my head to find a station with some news. The thunder roared, and from an immense gash

in the side of Tower One, a fireball unfurled. Now both buildings were aflame. A woman on Worth Street, her body shaking, said she had seen the plane, but I thought she must be delusional. You know the time. It was 9:03.

Like a lot of New Yorkers, I've never cared for the Twin Towers. I could never forgive them for usurping the position of the Empire State Building, and its tradition, as the city's highest structure. Also, they were ugly (a joke: the Twin Towers are the boxes the Empire State and Chrysler Buildings came in). I predicted the air quality in the offices would be atrocious, and it was. The towers lacked elegance, grace, wit, subtlety, humor, charm. They loomed, in their unmitigated blockishness, stinking of hubris, symbolizing not the adaptable, multifaceted resourcefulness of the human spirit, but the brute force of a bully determined to prevail at any cost. What does any third world country do when it wants to prove it's just as modern as Europe and America? It builds an incongruous, out of scale, highrise office tower in the middle of a landfill.

I remember someone saying in '93, "Who would want to blow up the World Trade Center?" And I remember thinking, "Who wouldn't?"

I got to school, and classes were canceled. So I procured an iced coffee and carried it to the northeast corner of Church and Worth, nine short blocks from the scene, with a clear view of the buildings' upper two-thirds. The towers burned. Pieces fell. Cries went up from the crowd. FBI agents with side arms appeared, from out of nowhere, to control the intersection. The radio began to say that the first plane (so there really was a plane) had been hijacked out of Boston, that they didn't know about the second plane, and that the Pentagon had also been hit. Another logic problem I couldn't solve. I told the people around me. They couldn't solve it either. Their eyes were glassy and wide.

The next day, in an interview on ABC, a woman who worked on one of the hundred's floors of Tower One said that she and her office mates started to leave when they saw the flames from Tower Two outside their windows. They were thirty floors down when the PA announced that the building was secure. The voice urged them to discontinue their trip. They looked at each other, and one woman shook her head, and they resumed their downward march.

When the thunder pealed again, it was to signal that the top of Tower One had come undone and begun to wobble, like the center that will not hold. My jaw



dropped, my hand flew to my face, and time, already bent out of shape, stopped. If it falls south it will land on the apartments at Battery Park City -all those families, all those pets, unthinkable. West, toward the marina and the World Financial Center, maybe not quite as bad East... but for a split second the great beast reasserted itself, one more time, before beginning its final descent, back to the elements from which it arose.

Demolition experts position their explosives to ensure a clean fall, in exactly the pattern they intend. The fall of Tower One resembled a planned demolition. It fell in on itself, neatly, in increments, even leisurely, with hesitations every ten floors or so, as if considering whether to continue, and each time I thought it would decide to stop, but it never did. I didn't see the "chrysanthemum" smoke effect that the tv cameras caught from a higher angle. From where I stood I saw only the billowing cloud, like at a rocket launch, in exact proportion to the square footage of the building it was now displacing, permeating every nook and cranny in a five block arc. People caught inside said it was black, but from Worth Street it looked creamy and warm, in contrast to the icy grey steel of the building's living gleam. It was 9:58.

Finally someone came to shoo us away. Normally I wouldn't have gone; I don't like being told what to do. But I walked south to Canal and caught the last train back over the Manhattan Bridge. Passengers coming from uptown had not yet heard the news. There was a woman in our car who had seen the falling bodies. We clambered to the window as the train crossed the East River, but the smoke obscured the view. By the time the train was above ground again, at Parkside Avenue, the second building had also disappeared.

Back home in Coney Island, they let us on the buses for free. Out of my living room window, which faces south, the sky and the ocean were crisp and blue. Remember that day? Not a cloud in sight; and now, not a plane. Out of my kitchen window, facing north, the sky was opaque with smoke, where I used to see the tops of the Twin Towers peeping through the trees. Later that night I awoke, and I prayed it had not been real. But the wind had changed, and I knew it was not a dream.

I stayed away from the city for two weeks, and I thought I was strong, but I wasn't prepared. I wasn't prepared for the sadness of crossing the Manhattan

Bridge; I wasn't prepared for the lines of delivery trucks waiting patiently for inspection by State Troopers and NYPD; I wasn't prepared for the otherwise empty streets; I wasn't prepared for the stench; and I wasn't prepared for the signs, on the walls and the mailboxes and the lampposts, of the people who will never be found. I had seen the signs on tv, but it's not the same. The weather had darkened; it was dismal and cold, and it seemed to me that everyone was on the verge of breaking down. One day I came off the train and a woman was sitting on a chair in the station, sobbing, the cops around meaning well but close themselves to joining her.

It's a tremendous wound. We won't recover from it quickly.

## Ariana Pelham

Class of 2003 (February graduate)

*The following are two emails sent to her friends, the first on September 13 and the second on September 29, when she returned to her home in London.*

5 a.m. at the end of the second day of this new eerie and paranoid city.

After yesterday anything seems possible, though still not believable. Watching the plane crash through the second tower is a sight I can never forget. It was the first site that I saw in the morning as I had rushed onto my roof after the sound of people from other buildings after the first crash. I was on the roof with my neighbor trying to assure him that we had seen the worst that we would see when the first tower crumbled down into rubble. The noise of the blast was echoed in the screams of all the people on the surrounding rooftops. And then silence.

There was almost a cartoon-like desire to rub our eyes to figure out whether we had really seen all that had happened in just 1 hour. After the shock, which just keeps coming in waves, there was a desire to do something, anything. To galvanize efforts in a sad hope of making things better. There are twenty of us in the building and those that were up on the roof were trying to account for those absent. One, my neighbor, works in the towers, and we had no idea where he was at the time of the blast. But he came home, after an hour, having walked from

there. He had blood all down his back that he hadn't noticed, and his shoes were white from the rubble.

As they evacuated the building, the first tower imploded and thousands of people started running uptown. He said that he could only see as far as the person in front of him because of the smoke and ash. But he also saw body parts on the ground and bits of airplane. Plenty of people were bleeding but they all just kept on running. He is fine as the blood turned out not to be his. But he still can't find most of the people from his office.

I cycled across town to the hospital to see about donating blood. All traffic had become human, as hordes of people were on foot heading uptown, trying to walk the 6 or 7 miles home. Men in business suits, but without jackets or briefcases, covered in white dust. Business women carrying their high heels in their hands, walking barefoot after the 1½ miles they had already covered. Like a carnival of people but lacking the festive spirit. Very little noise, no talking. Just everyone walking up and away from the smoke billowing 80 stories up into the air behind them. Plenty of stores were giving out free water as it was already 80 degrees. And one Hispanic storeowner was offering free Band-Aids to those with blisters!!

Although it had only been an hour since the crash, the line to donate blood was 5 blocks long and they were telling people to come back later. So I continued over Chelsea Piers on 23rd and West Side Highway where the boat is docked. It was being set up to be the staging point for all the ambulances and fire trucks, 100 of which were already parked outside. Sean (the boat's owner) was on his way out on the speed boat as I arrived, having received a call as the first crash occurred from Eyewitness News to go out down the river to get a better view. I picked up the chef from the boat and the two of us went cycling down to my law school, 5 blocks from the trade center. Although I didn't forget that the buildings were not there anymore, I kept looking for them as I do every morning to guide me to the school. It was like an amputee who can still feel his leg. Everywhere people staring at the gaping nothingness through the smoke.

The rest of the day was spent back at the piers where the morgue and triage areas were being set up. Opposite our boat is the double length ice rink which has been designated as the temporary morgue, and between the piers, the gym and basketball courts are for those still alive. We stood in lines trying to figure out

how to volunteer and what the plans were once victims were brought in. In the meantime, there was a lot of unloading of water and drinks that had been donated. At 9 p.m. we were eventually given a ten-minute orientation on what the procedure was to be: once patients were brought in they would have a colored-tag on them. Black=dead; red=will more than likely die, but they may not realize it themselves yet; yellow-probably will survive, and priority in treatment. Doug and I were to be assigned to the red and black area. With the black tagged bodies, we were told to go over their bodies and check for any marks, scars, tattoo, etc. Take notes on their clothing, appearance, and even look through their pockets in an attempt to identify them.

With the reds, first priority was to try and get their social security number and name, and leave the caring for the doctors. They repeatedly told us to not get personally involved. We were the escorts who relayed information from the ambulances to the doctors waiting in the gym. The first lot to come in were the firefighters and police. But although we were told to expect 500 people, through the night no more than 50 arrived too many of whom were red tagged. With them the only information that we had to gather was any allergies, as their badge numbers were all that was needed for ID purposes. It is now 24 hours after the blasts and still everyone is waiting for the large mass of victims. Basically, there aren't any. People either walked away or there is not enough of them left to be taken to a morgue.

After waiting all night for the rush, came back to the boat to try and sleep for a bit. But at that point Sean found 18 homeless National Guards from the search and rescue unit who needed a place to crash for a few hours. Spent an hour trying to find space and food for them. Also listening to their day of digging through the rubble looking for anything human. I ended up not sleeping, and woke them at 6 a.m. with breakfast (if I can't help directly I will at least make sure that all are well fed) so they could go back to work at the site. Took them downtown in Sean's 50-seater turbo speedboat, docking at North Cove, which is right in front of the trade center (or was). Although they are not allowing any boats into the harbor we got special permission due to the importance of our passengers. I spent the eeriest hour with Sean walking around what used to be the financial center. The majority of the buildings are not too badly damaged, considering the force of the

blast and the collapses. Those buildings directly in front of the trade center had several jagged edges and many shattered windows.

But the most distressing was the ground and the paper trail that was inches deep. All the paperwork of all the offices of both buildings had come tumbling to the ground, covering every surface and tree. The picnic area where 24 hours ago office workers took their breakfast no longer had any visible grass; it was blanketed in documents, business cards, and several personal photos that were once on desks. The whole area looked like a wedding planner had gone overboard with the confetti decoration. Millions upon millions of pieces of paper, many mundane, many of great importance when they were locked in office drawers. In the trees I saw remains of sandwiches and bottles of water. Pieces of clothing, but mostly just paper.

Under the tomes of paper lay the dust, in some places crusted on, and in others still billowing and rising up with every footstep. Breathing was still difficult despite the surgical masks that we were wearing, as they could only filter out the largest particles, leaving the rest to settle in our lungs—dust and asbestos. The boats that remained in the small marina were blackened by the ash, as was the water which we drove through. We walked one block inland, down Liberty Street to the base of the Trade Center. All that remained was a 50-foot tall skin of jagged steel, like a fork whose tongs had been pried apart. All around the base were cars crumbled like matchboxes piled atop one another. Several fire trucks lay on their sides, burnt and covered in ash, their doors open as if they were in mid use when the tower collapsed. There was blood but luckily most of it was covered by the ash and rubble. Apart from the three of us from the boat, all the rest of the people were rescue personnel. National Guard, firefighters, emergency crews, and police. Yet they just let us pass, although we kept a respectful distance from the foot of the towers. The bulldozers had come in several hours before dawn and were trying to move some of the larger chunks of steel.

No one but a handful of a lucky few can be alive under that. In some places the rubble was 3 stories high, crushing everything under it by its sheer weight. We stayed for almost an hour, but felt like trespassers and unable to do anything constructive. We were looking for people who needed to get out of the area, those who lived in the surrounding buildings but who hadn't been evacuated the day

before. In the midst of the carnage we came across several bewildered souls waking up to the destruction of their neighborhood. The first was a well-dressed middle-aged couple. As the first building collapsed, they had been leaving their building and were thrown to safety by one of the police officers. In the fall the wife badly injured two of her ribs. Unable to move far they managed to make it up to their apartment where they remained for the next 24 hours, during most of which they had no water or electricity and the sky remained black with soot. Two young women had made it out yesterday but returned last night to rescue their dogs and found that they couldn't get out of the area again. They and several other stragglers were herded onto the speed boat, while we went in search of two elderly people in a building a block away that we were told couldn't get out. The man had a heart condition and decided to stay as he had no where else to go, and the woman four stories above couldn't be moved without a stretcher. So with the 12 passengers and 3 dogs we left. Driving away from the marina no one looked behind them at the wreckage that was now their neighborhood.

The rest of today has been spent with the speedboat ferrying people and equipment back to Ground Zero (disaster zone) and helping the emergency effort at the piers pack up. By 8 p.m. most of the triage area had been dismantled, never used, as the survivors they had hoped for never materialized. The morgue in the ice rink has also closed its doors as there are no bodies, only pieces which are for the forensic teams to identify. Helping them pack was the saddest I have yet felt, and it brought home the magnitude of the disaster. They don't expect there to be more than a handful of other survivors out of this wreckage.

Hopefully tomorrow will be a brighter day. But cycling home tonight through the car-free, smoke-clogged downtown it felt as if the whole city has come to a grinding halt. In my normally bustling neighborhood, the few people on the streets are quiet, their faces covered by masks to combat the smoke. Nearly all the bars and restaurants here are closed, and there is a deafening silence.

I hear travel agents are offering great deals on flights to NY right now, including hotels that pay you to stay in them. So maybe see you all soon!!! :))

Til next time

Ariana

*Reflections on Ground Zero* (29 September 2001)

Since I am now back in the land of sanity [London] many people have asked me about life at Ground Zero in the wake of the attack on the WTC. For the nine days that I was there I tried hard to capture it in my memory and to put it into words, to write about it before it left me. But at the time it was too real, and the few hours that I had to myself each day I reserved for sleeping.

We have all seen disaster sites on television, be they natural catastrophes that strike all regions of the world, or man-made ones such as war zones, or even government-induced famines. For me I had always presumed that the professions arrived on the scene immediately and efficiently—at least under the circumstances—organized supplies and food for those involved in the actual rescue. After almost ten days at the base of the Twin Towers I realize that this is far from true, or perhaps it was simply the sheer scale of the disaster here that led to the lack of any coordinated organization.

The day after the attack I was down at Ground Zero, helping to ferry rescuers in and residents out of the area, believing that I would return again. On Day Two rain was predicted and so Sean insisted on returning and taking his large canopy from the Mariner III yacht down there in order that the donations that had been dropped off there wouldn't get wet. By the time I arrived he had also donated a number of trestle tables and chairs, and so the captain of a sail boat and I set about unpacking and organizing the piles upon piles of boxes, and black bags of clothing, medical supplies, and toiletries that had made their way to the site.

Throughout NY and the whole of the country donations had been pouring in to police stations and fire houses, with a 300,000 square foot conference center in Manhattan alone being filled to capacity. In the first few days the majority of the donations were meant for the hoped-for survivors. Clothing, but also large amounts of medical supplies: lumbar puncture kits, blood transfusions tubes, crutches, IV drips and the like. But by the third day the news stations were starting to announce that these donations—generous as they were—were unfortunately not needed and instead asked the donors to concentrate on items for the rescuers. Of the total amount of donations I would estimate that less than one percent ever reached us down at Ground Zero, leaving us to make do with the few items that tug boats, police vans, and fire boats had brought in.

From the first day onwards there was never any attempt by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) of the city to take charge of the supplies. With a disaster such as this, there could be no agreement between the 26 separate authorities on the scene as to who was in charge of anything. The FBI, police, fire fighters, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), the U.S. Army, Air Force, New York State, the Mayor's office of the City of New York, D-MAT (civilian branch of the U.S. government in charge of disaster relief) and so on. And then there were the volunteer rescuers, including Urban Search and Rescue teams from Los Angeles, Missouri, and across Canada; specialized K-9 teams; EMT from as far as New Zealand; union ironworkers from Texas, and one group from Alaska. Yet they all dug through the tens of thousands of tons of rubble, organizing better each day amongst themselves.

On Days One and Two, a group of volunteers like myself had made their way into Ground Zero and took charge of getting water, food, and clothing to the rescuers. By the time that Sean and I arrived, there were three other supply tents set up around the area, as well as two food stations manned by the Salvation Army. The relief effort was manned by what one firefighter called us—the Guerilla Volunteers. We had no authorization to be there, and each day a new group—the Army, police, FBI, and even the Air Force—threatened us with arrest. But we stayed as we knew that no one else was willing or able to take over the work. By the end of the operation, there were nine supply, triage, and rest sites spread around Ground Zero, an area the size of six city blocks.

At any one time there were up to 3,000 rescuers at the site, mostly working on the “front line”—digging through the rubble for survivors (and later merely for identifiable human remains). Those who had been there when the towers collapsed had not slept in days, closing their eyes for just a few moments before returning to the impossible task before them. The days were hot, increased by the heat of the fires that burned for two weeks solidly, and the nights were cold with rain coming in tropical-like storms on three occasions. As well as the technical supplies such as welding and digging tools, these rescuers needed the more mundane tools of life, such as food, clothing, and basic medical supplies. In all the time that I was there we never did manage to sort through all the boxes and bags of donations, but within the first day I was able to gauge what was most



needed, and to unpack and sort accordingly. Respirators, helmets, and strong work gloves were a primary necessity of those we were always running short. Aspirins and the like, while being used at an alarming rate, were a supply that we had in abundance, the same with socks and underwear.

Being set back one block from the front line I was not always able to see clearly all that was going on but I knew every detail, generally more than I wanted to as the rescuers would come into the store not just for supplies, but also for relief and comfort. They would talk about the progress—very little—and what they were seeing—too gruesome to repeat.

For the first three days I left my supply tent—known as the “General Store” and bearing a sign that we proudly made—only to go to the toilet. Food for me consisted of a few power bars, a lot of coca cola, and cartons of cigarettes that I had had the foresight to bring in with me. I knew that there were two other supply locations and could see them both, but it wasn’t until day 5 that I found the time to walk the two minutes over to them. On the opposite side of the financial center from us was the supply area known as the Flea Market, where several other volunteers had organized a line of fifteen tables, each bearing signs of the items stocked, allowing the rescuers to browse by looking for what they needed. Amy was a firm favorite there as she was not only organized and able to procure rare supplies when needed but because on the back of her sweatshirt she had written “Hugs also provided here.” She always had plenty of takers, shocked and exhausted men needing to feel human again. Our General Store was manned by myself and Greg, who was a skinner version of the Skipper in Gilligan’s Island, and generally a lot more capable. Several other friends and co-workers from the yacht joined us for shifts over the first few days, giving us a chance for a breather. But even on the few occasions when there were three of us constantly in the store, there was never a chance to sit down. And several nights passed when I was the only one around, having to ask bored patrol police, waiting to dig on the “pile,” to watch the store while I went to get food.

Throughout the day and night the various teams involved in the rescue effort would be given a break to get food, or sleep if they could manage. It was also their chance to get off the “pile,” and out of the “pit,” an stop looking at the remains of thousands of people. In they would troop to our humble store, some just to

browse and marvel at the generosity and variety of donations, but most with specific needs. Vick's Vapor Rub was a necessity for anyone working near the human remains as rubbed under the nostrils its smell is one of the few that can keep the rescuers from vomiting from the stench. For the tunnel rats—those who had to crawl in among the narrow spaces under the pile—their main needs were a complete change of clothing. Covered in juice (human remains) they were contaminated and all that they wore had to be thrown away, as they were at risk of serious illness, more so as the days wore on. One day four a tall, bulky firefighter walked into the bent and while barely looking at me, motioned at his clothes and simply said, “New.” His eyes were steeled over and he wore no expression at all, except one of someone who was no longer there. Immediately I dashed about through the aisles of tables that I had set up with clothing and got him everything from underwear to boots and gloves. Still without looking up he sat down on one of the chairs and completely stripped. He carefully put his contaminated clothes and boots into a garbage bag that I had given him and dressed again in the clean clothes. I asked if he was okay, to which I received a curt, “I’m fine.” I offered him a quiet space to sit in the back of the tent, and asked if he wanted to talk. He said nothing and simply left without even acknowledging my question. I took his bag of clothing over to the hazardous waste, and went back to helping the others who had come in. Several hours later, at 5 a.m., he walked back in again, and attempted a smile. “I’m sorry about earlier, and thank you for your help. Would it be okay if I got hug?” So barely reaching his armpits I held this huge man for a few moments until he eventually backed away. I almost cried when he left the store, but realized that I was able to give him the one supply that didn’t need unpacking of ordering or organizing. I never saw him again.

Every day I fell in love with all the rescuers who were there, as they were having to witness what no person should ever have to see. I watched them cry and listened all day as they spoke of the horror of what lay beneath the pile. Swimming through human parts is how many of them described it, as they crawled around on all fours, trying to grab for any human remains that they saw. They all put their lives at risk each time they entered the pit, and scarred their sleep forever. Engine Company Five, based out of the Bronx, lost 15 of their 40 “brothers” when the towers collapsed, yet the remaining men were there until

Day Six, until they knew that they had done all that they could. Over the course of that time I got to know many of them; they would come by at the same time each night, stopping into the one reclusé of sanity and comfort around them. At home they may be drunks and beat their wives, but there at Ground Zero they were marvels of humanity, people for whom I had the highest admiration.

The one aspect that was most startling to me was the admiration and thanks that we volunteers received from the rescuers. For several of the guys there I came to be known as sexy British “radar”—the one in charge supplies in M.A.S.H. For me I was doing the most basic of volunteering and in the scheme of the disaster and the work to be done, my job appeared to be trivial. I was not saving lives, nor even taking part in the recovery operation, but every single person who passed through the store always made a big deal about thanking me for being there, amazed at the work that all of us volunteers were doing. At first I didn’t know how to react and so started on a round of mutual appreciation “thank yous.” But within a few days I understood that it was important to them that we volunteers were there. It proved to them that they were not the only ones who were working for days without sleep, and that they were not alone down there in that island of hell. One of the other volunteers, who had set up shop in St. Joe’s Chapel closer to the front line, explained this need to me. For the rescuers we volunteers represented the faces of all the people around the country and the world who cared. We were the personification of all the love and hope that people had placed on these rescuers, and their only link with that other civilian world.

As the days wore on, many of the rescuers also came to learn of the politics of the volunteers and were amazed and incensed to learn that the various authorities were attempting to arrest us. One Day Four I had made my way to the front lines as I had heard that they needed a large number of work gloves, a supply that at the time I had a lot of. As I was returning to my tent, I was stopped by an army captain who asked to see my authorization to be at Ground Zero. I explained that I didn’t have any official credentials as the Mayor’s office was refusing to give them to us, and that I had no time to go find other authorization, and so he started to escort me to the perimeter of the secure zone that made up Ground Zero. As we were walking farther away from my tent and my duties, one of the chiefs of police from the Bronx recognized me, and asked the captain what

he was doing with me. Furious when told that they were arresting me, the two started an argument about my fate, until the chief reminded the captain that if he expelled me he was simply going to have to leave his army duties and man the supplies himself. That sealed it. Within a few minutes I was back at work unpacking boxes and sharing one of my few remaining coca colas with the chief of police.

In the first week, several of the 50 or so volunteers that had managed to get into the area spent too much of their time having meetings and otherwise attempting to be large and in charge. As our supply tent operated separately from the rest, in terms of volunteers and supplies, I simply ignored them. While they were well-meaning for the most part, and were hoping to bring some order to the chaos, they were too busy with their dreams of management to actually get any work done. I attended one meeting, during which twenty of us tried to find a better means of communication, so that we didn't have to send rescuers running from one supply area to the next looking for a particular item, and also to coordinate the arrival of supplies which were not reaching us due to security fears of the U.S. Army. For the first twenty minutes progress was being made and certain decisions were reached, including the distribution of radios. But after that it disintegrated into a pissing competition with several of the bossiest trying desperately to assert themselves as the top dog. I left before any conclusions were reached, as there was too much to be done without having to deal with that many egos. Interestingly, those that were the most vociferous about organization and their own role in the managing of supplies were the first to leave, and after a week they were seen no more.

Getting supplies into the area always remained the biggest challenge, given that security by road was extremely tight. As our General Store was right on the marina I was able to be more productive by making friends with all the area police boats from Massachusetts to New Jersey. Making sure that their sniffer dogs first checked all supplies for explosives I would receive a few boat loads of supplies every few days. Unfortunately most of it was useless: second-hand socks, more bandages, and enough contact lens solution to clean the Hudson River. But I did make one great contact with a police policeman who was based out of the First Precinct, the area in which the Towers had stood. Bobby Amaniero, a classic Italian-American cop, with a heart of gold. He explained that he had been con-

tacted by a local woman who had a lot of money and a lot of contacts with many large manufacturing firms and that she could set us up with most anything we needed. Dubious, as I had heard so many people promise to get me what we needed, I wrote him a list of some of the more requested supplies, including new steel-toes boots, insoles, welding gloves, folding shovels, and saw blades. It was already 3 a.m. when I first met him, and didn't think about him again, realizing that it was a long shot, and so tried other methods to restock.

At 9 a.m. the next morning, a police car pulled up next to the tent and out popped a grinning Bobby. His trunk and back seat were packed, and I felt like a child on Christmas day as I watched him and several other officers unload. They proudly placed nearly everything on the list in front of the tent. I know that he wasn't doing this for me but I was so grateful that I gave him the biggest of hugs though he was probably the person there least in need of one. He also brought a surprise donation: six dozen freshly baked donuts that the bakery next to the station house had donated to the rescuers. Unfortunately Bobby was only able to make one more delivery as Army security stopped allowing his car into Ground Zero. Another day—I forget which one; when you don't sleep time gets jumbled—I mentioned to a New Jersey State Trooper in this boat that we needed ice. Four hours later he and twenty other rescuers on their break unloaded five tons of the stuff, leaving us with the dilemma of how to stop it from all melting in the 80-degree heat.

Despite, or probably because of, the scale of the disaster, I have never met so many amazing people, all of whom put aside their own lives and fears to work together, to attempt the impossible. Even though most of the rescuers admitted within the first few days that there simply could be no survivors, they worked without break. They knew that in part the operation was going on for their sake, to assuage their guilt at having survived when so many of their "brothers" had died. The other volunteers too had made their way down their desperate to contribute in any way, and despite the sheer exhaustion that was shared by all and the constant threats of arrest refused to leave. For us, we were resolved to stay for as long as the rescuers had to say, doing what we could to ease their task, even if it just meant providing a dry pair of boots or a human to talk to.

On Day Two a remarkable woman walked into the tent, wearing a Salvation

Army T-shirt and a broad grin. I'm Vie Bowman. I've just driven from North Carolina, so just tell me what I can do. A non-nonsense large-hearted grandmother, Vie had waited for a day to be told by the Salvation Army whether they would need her in New York. Impatient for the phone call, she got in her car and drove 800 miles without stopping. She parked her van "somewhere on Sixth Avenue, which I think is in Manhattan" (actually a street three miles long) and flagged down a police car. Not taking no for an answer she sat in the patrol car until the harangued officer agreed to drive her to Ground Zero. For 27 hours Vie refused to sit or even take a food break as she furiously unpacked and organized the store to her satisfaction, constantly commenting on the energy that my friend Magdalena and I had, though neither of us had just driven halfway across the country. After three days without sleep, Vie eventually agreed to go find a motel, take a shower, and get a few hours's sleep before coming back. Unfortunately for us, this amazing woman never managed to get back in, stopped by security at the perimeter. She called me two days later from her home in North Carolina, having once again driven 800 miles without stopping. She wanted to remind me to get more extra large sweaters for "our boys" as she heard on the news that the temperature was going to drop that night. I spent the next six days missing her, and trying to make her proud of my attempts of organization.

By Day Eight, the rumors of all the supply tents being shut down were getting stronger. And eventually that afternoon we all had a visit from "Frankenstein" (due to his appearance and size), a man from OEM ("Overrated Experts of Mismanagement," as one volunteer put it) who while telling us that we had no clue what we were doing, still tried to placate several of the more territorial volunteers. He explained that they would be coming in starting the next morning and taking over the supplies operation, and perfunctorily thanked us for our help. As the General Store was the last supply tent that he visited he was particularly churlish with me, perhaps having been given grief by so many of the other volunteers. My only question was why, if he claimed that they were in charge, it had taken them nine days to get it together to make an appearance, an appearance when most of the difficult tasks had been accomplished. Curtly he replied that their head office was located in one of the surrounding buildings that had collapsed, though they had all survived. His arrogance was such that I was tempted to tell him that if

there was an office right there at Ground Zero it shouldn't have taken them any time at all to evacuate and get straight back to work. But I was too tired to even attempt sarcasm, a rarity for me. I was simply relieved the "professionals" were eventually showing up, and that meant I could return to my life, such as it was.

Before strutting off, "Frankie" waved his hand over everything in the store and said, "This is all useless. I expect it to be thrown out by the morning." After he left nothing changed. Rescuers still came in, supplies were still dwindling, and I was still at the edge of insanity due to exhaustion. One of the volunteers from the Chapel up the road came down to compare notes on my meeting with OEM, and explained that everything had to be thrown out due to it all being considered contaminated by the foul and putrid air. We had all at some point been issued respirators, the large bulky type that filter out particles as well as certain gases. The fear was not of asbestos or some chemical agent, but the disease that can spread while breathing in the vapors of 6,000 decomposing bodies. Certain days the air was worse than others (though it was always fetid and smoke-laden), and then I would attempt to don the mask for a short while. But apart from the mask not being the best of fashion accessories I found it more difficult to breathe with it on, and so probably only wore it for an hour or so over the ten days. It simply hung about my neck constantly chaffing my chin. Yet everything on the site was considered to be contaminated and a danger to health by the OEM, and despite the fact that clothing and all other articles in the store were only being used at Ground Zero by rescuers who themselves were contaminated, OEM wanted to throw everything out.

That day the two other supply bases, St. Joe's Chapel and the Flea Market, started to pack up their operations. All of the food products were thrown out and the clothing and other non-technical supplies were bagged up, while they decided what to do next. I was alone in the store for the most part during the last four days and so had neither the time, nor the energy, to start dismantling anything while supplies were still needed. Aware that much of the clothing could be used for the thousands of people around the city and the world who were homeless we all started trying to get as much of it out as possible. OEM was informed of our efforts and never categorically objected to it. Many of the volunteers spent that last day on the phone to shelters and charities around the city trying to find

homes for all the still-useful supplies. Two of my favorite volunteers were a young couple from Colombia who had left their three-year-old with his mother while they stayed at Ground Zero working non-stop for nine days. The wife, Bianca, was six months pregnant, but that never slowed her down, and they were both always wearing smiles, and joking with all the rescuers. They had contacted the Colombian Consulate in New York and after much discussion with security at Ground Zero had found a way for much of the clothing and toiletries to be picked up, so that the Consulate could ship it to an earthquake-stricken region in Colombia. We had all spent nine days desperately trying to get supplies in, and now we were attempting to reverse the routes and to get supplies out before OEM came in with their garbage dumpsters.

I went to visit Elizabeth who had been managing the supplies at St. Joe's Chapel to see what her plan was. Like the rest of us she never left the area and slept where she could a couple of hours a day. We were all starting to reach the end of our reserve energy supplies, but were still determined to see the job through. A soft-spoken skinny girl, who never complained, I found her sitting amidst a vast tower of boxes and bags, so tall that she was barely visible. We slumped down to the floor together to figure out what was really going on. She had spoken to people at Covenant House, a half-way home for runaway teens, who were interested in taking whatever we could give them. She had tried to organize everything into labeled boxes, but was at the point of giving up. To encourage her I joked with her about the good we were doing for humanity. Almost in tears with tiredness and frustration, she squeaked in her soft voice, "Fuck humanity." But within seconds she was back at it, knowing that if she didn't continue, all these piles of clothing would end their life soon in a landfill.

I left the next morning, too tired and emotionally-drained to watch as OEM came in to throw out what we hadn't been able to ship elsewhere. Sean had made a couple of runs in his speedboat of supplies out of Ground Zero, that were gratefully received by the various charities waiting back at the dock on the "Mainland" (anywhere but Ground Zero). My last two days I had spent too much time at the Front Line running supplies and had seen for myself much of what had so disturbed the rescuers there. Human parts were still being brought out of the pit, and carried down off the pile waiting to be identified by DNA at the morgue. I saw



and still can't comprehend that those were once parts of actual people. Later, while taking medical exam gloves over to the morgue, I watched with the same disbelief as those parts were brought in, bagged, and labeled with the location in which they were found.

None of what I saw in the last ten days is part of reality. Ground Zero was not just a place, but more specifically, a time. One that for me is over, even though I flew over it several hours after leaving for the last time on a plane to England. Yet the worst of all is that now that it is over, some part of me misses it. Maybe it was that I felt alive there in a way I haven't done before. I was doing something outside of the ordinary and was part of a monumental wave of humanity, witnessing the best of people. I went to the Mainland to attempt rest on Day Five, and it all just seemed so mundane and trivial. I took the speedboat out of Ground Zero at 2 a.m. and felt an overwhelming sense of despair as the smoke of the Towers receded as we headed upriver. Once back at the dock, I had to walk one pier over to where the yacht is moored. I saw a woman jogging, and a couple walking by, chatting, laughing, and my first reaction was to punch them, to shake them out of their momentary happiness. But they too may have suffered more than I know, and were perhaps consoling themselves in their own way. I realized that my perspective was all bent out of shape. I walked onto the yacht where Magdalena, my Polish friend and co-worker, had cooked me some Pirogis. I could barely stand but forced myself to eat, and even managed a short cry. The look on her and my boss, Doug's, faces as I walked in told me how dreadful I looked and felt, but I went back the next morning after five hours' sleep, already feeling guilty at having left. Before returning I brought the local store out of Vitamin C, which I spent the next few days forcing onto all the rescuers.

It has been exactly a week now since I left, and I've spent that time "recovering" in London, surrounded by family and friends who love me. Yet it is still there and it is all I see, not just when I am asleep but when I'm awake as well. I have regained some perspective on life, and attempted not to dwell on the images that still flood my mind. I go out for dinner with friends, play with my nephew, even had sex once, but I still can't shake it. It is not the thought of the death of so many that haunts me, but their remains, and the effect of that one the rescuers who witnessed it day after day, and perhaps the effects that I may feel later.

I still can't imagine not having been there, and wish that I could have done more. I keep thinking of details that I could have organized better, be it phoning a local hardware store and asking them to donate the short-handed sledgehammers that I couldn't find elsewhere, or getting more supplies in from across the river. But it is over, and I did what little I could to help the rescuers in the most vile of places, despite many concerned friends trying to get me out of there, seeing my task as fruitless.

A memory that I will always have, and one that despite the visions, I will never regret. I just hope that the present state of affairs doesn't lead us back to this same pint, and that the Western world regains its perspective and perhaps some accountability, rather than just answering terror with terror.

Back in reality, this is Ariana Pelham, signing off.

## Michael Perlin

Professor

My flashback memory of the events of the morning of September 11 probably seems pretty banal. I was driving to the Trenton train station at 9:10 on my way to work, and as I was about to turn off the news station in a search for classical music (irony here: I never listen to the news in the morning; the radio was on 770 only because I had been fruitlessly searching for the Yankees game the night before on my way *home* from work), I heard a scream. Metronomically, I listened to the news unveil, and continued my drive to the train station, when I had the good sense to turn around and come home (irony #2: had this happened on a Monday or Wednesday, I would have been on the 7:26 train and would have thus been walking up the escalators at the WTC at exactly 9:05 a.m. Because this was a Tuesday, I hadn't been planning on getting to school until 11 or so).

I returned home, left messages for my wife (at work), my daughter (at college), and my son (at high school), and called my mom (she was asleep and didn't yet know what had happened, and had not yet put in her hearing aids; you can imagine the conversation. . .), to let all know I was fine. By 11:30, I had made

actual contact with each of the three for whom I had left messages (my son told me that, as soon as he heard the news at school—before he got my message—he went to the computer lab to check, via Mapquest, how close NYLS was to the WTC. Sigh. . .). I spent the rest of the day in a daze 60 miles from Manhattan, hypnotically—or, perhaps—numbly—glued to the television.

For 17+ years, I had come through the WTC on my daily commute, trudging from the PATH train to the escalators, to the mall, to the street (or, if the weather were particularly messy, to the E train subway tunnel, so that I could walk underground to Chambers St.). What I've come to realize anew daily since September 11 is how much the world of WTC merchants had been part of my life. When it was time for the spring baseball magazines or the autumn basketball magazines to come out, I'd go from one newsstand to another trying to locate Street and Smith's. On the way home, I'd frequently stop at *Ecce Panni* for a special bread. If I were getting ready for a trip, I'd visit Border's and look for "airplane reading" (for me, a very specific genre). When I taught in the evening, I'd always stop at Akbar's Greenhouse Café for a snack, and participated in an on-going kidding session with the young woman at the cash register about my insistence on low-fat muffins). This is the first year since 1984 that I purchased an anniversary card anywhere else. And I was also a frequent visitor to the airline ticket offices one flight up. (Irony #3: I'm just back from a trip to Budapest, and the itinerary for that trip was prepared by the American Airlines office, and reads "3 World Trade Center"; I had the same reaction when I boarded the plane using that itinerary as I did when, several months after my wife's grandmother passed away, we found a container in the freezer labeled, "Grandma Mollie's chicken fricassee").

I understand, of course, that these are all trivial losses compared to those who lost lives and livelihoods. But part of my life—my routine, my small pleasures—are gone forever. And I also mourn for these.

## Lori J. Quinn

Class of 2002, evening division

I was going to work as normal, getting off the subway at Wall Street out of the JP Morgan-Chase building. I noticed papers about the ground. I especially took notice because they were Marsh & McLennan papers—a company the law firm I work for had dealt with. I wondered why they were on the ground, it was like a ticker-tape parade. I got to the corner of Water Street and Pine Street when someone said a helicopter hit the WTC. At first everyone thought it was an accident. I and others ran to the corner of Water Street and Maiden Lane and watch the fire and to our horror we all watched a plane strike the other Tower. People began to scream and cry. I tried to call my husband on my cell phone but it did not work. I ran into my building and went up to my office. Co-workers were in our reception area where everyone could see the towers ablaze. Some of my co-workers were not there yet.

We still did not know this was a terrorist attack. We continued to watch in horror and suddenly the Tower fell. I screamed “oh my God its gone.” I ran to tell a co-worker whose son’s girlfriend worked in the WTC. I called my sister frantically, and kept saying “I can’t take it anymore, I can’t watch this anymore.” She said get out. . . get out—go to Brooklyn. My co-worker said hang up, hang up we’re getting out of here. I told my sister I was leaving. She asked where I was going; I said I didn’t know.

We went to the water figuring it was the safest place to be. My co-worker got on line for the Ferry to New Jersey. I and a girl my co-worker met outside our building who was alone and got out of the WTC (she worked for Deloitte & Touche) went to the Brooklyn Bridge. We were at the foot of the bridge when all the people heard what we thought to be an explosion. People began to panic and run back toward Manhattan. The “explosion” was the second tower falling.

I made it to Brooklyn. I am safe. My heart is heavy with sadness for all of those who lost their lives, for all of those families who will never get to hug their loved one again. This experience has changed my life forever.

## David Schoenbrod

Professor

That morning I was at home getting some writing done when I heard that thud. Thinking it was yet another auto accident at the corner of Broome and West Broadway, I looked out the window onto West Broadway. The workmen on the roof of the building next door were not looking down at the intersection, but all ten of them were rather staring fixedly downtown. I walked to the big windows facing downtown through which I have had a view of the twin towers for twenty-seven years. I could see on the face of one of the towers a dark spot ringed in red. I thought immediately of how the Empire State Building is specially lit for special occasions such as the red and green for Christmas. This seeming hole in One World Trade Center must, I thought, be some special promotional stunt, but how the hell did they do it? Then I remembered the thud and turned on the television and heard the news.

There I sat on sofa watching the first tower burn on television and out my window, side by side. I could not believe what I was seeing until, all of a sudden, that huge ball of fire suddenly erupted out of the side of Two World Trade Center. I couldn't sit still any longer. But, where to go? People were already streaming up West Broadway to get away from the towers. It would be nuts to run downtown. So I went to the roof of our building. Here at least there was no glass between me and the incredible, awful events. Then an even more shocking surprise. Two World Trade Center collapsed. I knew immediately that most of those fire fighters I had heard roaring by were dead. A huge cloud rolled up West Broadway chasing the crowd before it.

By the time One World Trade Center collapsed, I was prepared to believe that anything could happen. So when I could see nothing south of Chamber Street but a cloud of dust, I wondered whether everything down there had gone down. I cringed to think of my many friends who work or live in the buildings around the Trade Center. As the cloud settled slowly, first one building and then several began to emerge. I almost leapt for joy. At least something, someone, was left.

For twenty-seven years now, my days have ended sitting in a sofa looking out

the windows at the twin towers. There they always were, cool and bright and serene, no matter how tempestuous the life in the city below. The night of the day in which I and so many other New Yorkers witnessed the premeditated murder of thousands, I sat in the same place and saw nothing but sky and a plume of smoke heading towards Brooklyn. My eyes were dry that night, but every time I looked out those windows in the days that followed, I was flooded with grief. It was not the view I missed, but my city, my living room, my life as it was.

## Gerald Simpkins

Class of 2002, evening division

I arrived at my office at 1 World Trade Center at about 6:30. I took the elevator up to the 69th floor and read the newspaper and then finished up some things that I had been working on. It was a bright, sunny day. At about 8:50, the building shook violently and I thought that it was going to topple over. It must have moved about 5 feet. Looking out the window, papers, desk and people began falling out of the sky. For the first time in my life, I thought that I was going to die. Most of the people in my office arrive before 9 so they were already there. I ran to a friend's desk to see if she was in and thank God she wasn't.

People were told to leave the floor immediately by our boss. They did. Ten of us assembled in the hall and came up with a plan for evacuating a co-worker that was wheelchair bound. After the bombing of 1993, we had gotten a special chair to use to evacuate him. Two of us went looking for the chair and making sure that everyone had left the floor. We found the chair and went back to the group. One side of the floor was filling with smoke and fuel was beginning to soak the floor near where we were. We took our friend to the stairs and strapped him into the evacuation chair. He weighed between 250 and 300 pounds. I took his wheelchair out of the staircase and tried to put it someplace safe. That was when I heard people trapped on the elevator. I couldn't open the doors and I didn't know where they were exactly but I knew that someone would be there to get them out soon. I just knew it.

Going down with two in the front and two in the back, we took our friend down the stairs. People were coming down behind us and we let them pass. That happened a lot. The lower we got, the more smoke-filled the stairwell became. It was getting hard to breathe. When we got to the 44th floor, I ran ahead of the group and scouted out another stairwell. The 44th floor was a war zone. There was so much smoke that I couldn't see but I found the other stairwell. It was hot but there wasn't any smoke. I ran back to the group and we made it over to that stairwell. An FBI agent was going up the stairs and he told us that a plane had also hit building 2. That was when we realized that this wasn't a horrible accident. We kept going down and firemen and policemen kept going up. They would pat us on the back and tell us what a good job we were doing.

Vending machines near the stairs had been broken open and we began sharing bottles of water and Snapple with firefighters and with each other. We were hot. But we weren't really scared yet. Probably because we had no idea how bad things were outside. At about the 21st floor, we were stopped by the firemen. They were bringing up equipment and wanted us to move off of the stairwell. They asked us to leave our friend there and to keep going; saying that they would bring him down later. We all stopped there. My knee hurt like hell since I had had knee surgery 2 weeks ago. We were there for maybe 5 minutes when the building shook violently and the lights went out. Now we were scared. We told the firemen that we were taking our friend and going. They said okay and asked us to stay to one side. So we kept going only now it was dark and now I was scared. At about the 12th floor, firemen held up the crowd. They said they wanted to make sure it was safe to go down. Then some firemen were running down the stairs from behind us yelling "Go, go, go..." We went. Holes were in the walls of the stairwell and water was all over the place. Finally, we made it to the lobby. Only it wasn't a lobby any more—it was a war zone. Everything was grey and blown to pieces. The doors weren't there any more, broken glass was all over the place. But there was daylight and we went towards it. At about 10:15, we finally made it out of 1 World Trade Center.

I couldn't believe what I saw when I got outside on West Street. Fire trucks were covered in grey stuff and there was about two inches of it on the ground. I tripped on something but didn't want to look down because I didn't want to

know that it was a body part. No one was around except EMS personnel and us. A fireman helped us carry our friend towards a fire truck. We were tired and wanted to rest. I looked back and saw that the building was on fire. Then I saw the people jumping. It seemed to be happening in slow motion. After about 15, I couldn't look any more. Someone told us that where we were standing wasn't safe so we kept going. Media kept taking our pictures or filming us. A barefoot reporter wanted to talk to us but thought better of it. Then something happened. People started running and I looked back to see a giant cloud coming towards us. It was like something from an Indiana Jones movie. We ran towards Stuyvesant High School and made it inside. An ambulance took our friend to a hospital and I wanted to go home. I walked outside and looked back and the Towers just weren't there any more.

A friend and I decided to walk to midtown since we were told that everything had been shut down. A woman told us that the Pentagon had also been attacked. People were all over the streets. It felt like World War III. At about 5, I finally made it home. I had walked down the stairs in the WTC, to 45th Street in Manhattan, had to stand in line for a couple of hours to catch a ferry to New Jersey, walked from Weehawken to my home in Jersey City, and although my leg hurt, I was one of the lucky ones.

Last night there was a memorial service at Madison Square Garden for Port Authority employees that were killed on Sept. 11th. As the names scrolled across the screen, I realized how easily one of those names could have been mine.

*Note: The following story about Gerald Simpkins ran in In Brief in Spring 2002.*

The hero: Gerald Simpkins, an Evening Division student in his fourth and final year at New York Law School, started his Port Authority workday as usual on Sept. 11, drinking coffee and chatting with coworkers on the 69th floor of Tower One.

By the end of the day, he and nine colleagues had gained hero status by hauling John Abruzzo, their wheelchair-bound coworker, down 69 floors despite choking smoke, intense heat, and the pleas of a firefighter to save themselves and let rescue workers carry out their friend.

Simpkins, a Port Authority accounting supervisor, does not think of himself as a hero, because he never realized he was in any particular danger. "The heroes



are the ones who knew what was going on and went there anyway,” the 33-year-old South Carolina native told *In Brief* two months later.

His group struggled for more than an hour, taking turns at the heavy work, to squeeze Abruzzo down crowded stairwells in a special evacuation chair, equipped with runners instead of wheels. By the time they had gone down about 20 floors, the stairwell had filled with smoke, and Simpkins ran ahead to scout out a better escape route. The group switched to a less smokey, but extremely hot stairwell on the 44th floor and continued descending.

At the 20th floor, firefighters coming up asked them to make room for heavy equipment and allow their rescue team to come back to take Abruzzo down. The building shook, and the group was plunged into darkness as the other tower collapsed (although they did not know what had happened). But they insisted on staying by their coworker and helping him out. “We just decided we were going to stay with him and not leave him,” Simpkins said. When they reached the 12th floor, firefighters told them to wait while they checked to see if it was safe to go on. The walls were tearing apart and water was pouring down on them. Seconds later a fireman shouted, “Go, go, go!” and the group moved on. They got out and, after a brief rest, hefted Abruzzo’s chair and ran just ahead of a big soot cloud, through debris-strewn streets to refuge at nearby Stuyvesant High School—only minutes before the second tower collapsed.

Simpkins’ interest in law was sparked by his volunteer work helping families of children with AIDS navigate their way through the legal system. After the ordeal, Simpkins had difficulty sleeping, developed a twitch in his eye, and had trouble concentrating on his studies. He worried about anthrax, the war, and another attack. But he definitely wants to complete his J.D. to be able to do public service work. He credits Professor Carlin Meyer with helping him get through the semester. “It’s needed even more,” Simpkins said. “But it kind of makes you think more about life and how short it could be, and maybe I need to enjoy myself a little bit more.”

The Port Authority lost 74 of his coworkers in the attack and Simpkins attended an overwhelming number of memorial services and funerals. He also went to the services for the firemen he met in the stairwell. “The faces kind of get stuck in your head,” Simpkins said. “Especially the ones that were on that 20th floor.”

## David Smoren

Class of 2005, evening division

Having arrived at my office located at Spring St. and 6th Ave. at 8:00 am, it was a workday like any other. I got some coffee and sat down at my desk and began reading my contracts assignment. Approximately forty-five minutes later I along with some fellow colleagues heard a somewhat loud crash. Running to the windows we saw what appeared to be an accidental plane crash into the north tower of the world trade center. I could not believe my eyes as I watched the flames and thick black smoke pour from the building I could not help but feel helpless, as I realized that people who were also starting their workday were dying before my very eyes.

Five minutes after the crash myself and two other co-workers went up to the roof in-order to get a better view of the accident. Once on the roof I began to fully realize the extent of the human carnage-taking place. My heart began to sink further in my chest, as I could not imagine witnessing the death of so many. I as well as the majority of society put such a high value on human life.

Approximately ten-minutes later, I saw a plane in the sky coming from the south; I yelled what the hell is that guy doing. Initially I thought the plane was misguided from the smoke. I continued to watch in horror as the plane was skillfully piloted toward the south tower. The plane turned, and for a moment disappeared from sight. Almost breathless at the time I watched as the explosion ripped through the tower.

It was all too apparent at that time that we were being attacked. Hundreds of thoughts raced through my mind as I watched my colleagues with the same expressions of disbelief. I thought to myself that this must be a dream and that I had not yet woken up. Fearing for further attack I came down from the roof and tried to gather my composure.

Having witnessed this firsthand I sometimes wish that I had not gone to the roof for a better view. I will never forget what I saw, for at any moment I can relive the exact event.

## Donna Spalter

Assistant Director of Public Affairs

The September 11th tragedy has left so many without. So many people left without loved ones; without homes; without hope. My experience on that day certainly does not in anyway compare to the pain and fear of the people who died that day must have felt. Nor does it compare to the despair their loved ones must now endure. Sometimes I even feel ridiculous praying to my God feeling that she would laugh at my prayers in the wake of so much genuine misery. But I do pray, softly, for I cannot help myself. Like most everyone, my reality has changed drastically since that infamous day.

I didn't come into the City by train as I usually do on September 11. Instead I drove into midtown with my husband because he had an appointment there. Just before he dropped me off at a midtown subway station, the report of a plane hitting the first tower came over the radio.

"Maybe you shouldn't go," he said.

In true hardcore New York City commuter style I assured him that the WTC wasn't that close to the Law School and that I would be all right. With that I got out of the car and joined my fellow "lemmings" as we walked down the stairs into subway. At that time I assumed that the plane hitting the tower was an accident.

When I got out at Brooklyn Bridge/City Hall, lots of people with cell phones in hands and looks of fear on their faces surrounded me. I reached for my cell to call my husband only to find what they already knew—the cell phone—the quintessential commuter tool was dead. I quickened my steps as I walked down Broadway toward the Law School, occasionally looking back to see the smoke. The sounds of sirens increased as I approached the corner of Church and Worth Street. And for the first time I was able to see the towers, one with a gaping hole filled with black smoke and flames. Somehow I knew then that it was not an accident—but an act of war. I remember standing and staring in disbelief with other people. I remember us all saying the same thing in unison, almost like a mantra. We said, "Oh my God!" "Oh my God!"

I knew that I needed to get to a phone to call my family to tell them that I was all right even though I didn't feel like I was.

When I spoke to my daughter, I felt this tremendous wave of fear overtake me. I really felt like that day could be the last day of my life and that I would never see her or any of my family members again. I told her how much I loved her and hung up the phone. From that moment on the sequence of events blurred and my actions became automatic.

I never felt so alone in my life. I returned to the student lounge to watch the news. I listened to the reports of the plane hitting the Pentagon and the other plane crashing and saw when the first tower fell. I remember listening, but being afraid to hear. I needed the filter of the TV to absorb some of the horror.

I walked from the student lounge, to the staff lounge, sitting, standing, trembling, and secretly looking for someone to say with confidence that this was all a misunderstanding and that everything was going to be all right. Isn't that what happens in the movies?

I was outside in front of 47 Worth Street with a friend who needed to smoke a cigarette when the second tower fell. I heard an indescribable rumbling. I felt the ground shake and saw people running up Church Street from the dust cloud. It felt like we were in hell. I had not sense of time, nor did I care. I wanted two things only: to get home and to feel safe again.

Dean Matasar asked everyone to assemble in the Stiefel Room where he offered as much comfort as he could and told us when leaving the law school to walk north. "For those of you who are geographically challenged, he quipped, North is that way." He pointed to the front of the room and was able to make some of us smile.

As I tried to calculate how long it would take walk to New Rochelle in uncomfortable shoes, Dean Barbara Leshinsky invited me and other staff to stay at her home on the upper West Side. I accepted and then climbed ten flights of stairs to my office (I was afraid I would get stuck in the elevator) to get the rest of my things.

We were afraid to walk near any big buildings and therefore decided to walk on the Westside highway. In the mass exodus I saw World Trade Center survivors walking like zombies, some with briefcases in hand, covered with dust and others

covered in blood. I saw strangers inviting these dust-covered people to their homes to clean up and reporters trying to interview them. The surreal scene continued as helicopters hovered over our heads and countless ambulances drove up the highway.

At one point people began to run. When Barbara told us to cross the street quickly I noticed the urgency in her voice and the frighten look on her face. The reason was that she heard there could be a gas main break.

On the right side of road a man sat parked in a dark blue SUV. Barbara asked him if he would give us a ride to the Upper West Side and he said, “Yeah, I guess so.” He was clearly as stunned as we all were and had pulled over to compose himself. In a movie, the actor Will Smith would have played him. In reality his name was Sam and he was truly our hero. Sam followed the ambulances straight up the West Side Highway and brought us to a safer place. When we thanked him, he thanked us for giving him some direction. He worked for a delivery service and they were told to go home. He lived in New Jersey and since the bridges and tunnels were closed, there was not anyway he would be getting home soon. He had relatives living further uptown he would go there until he was able to get home.

Amid the terror and uncertainty of the day, the kindness and decency of people prevailed. The kindness of strangers the feeling that “we were all in this together” helped to get me through. Thank you to Dean Matasar for his leadership and direction; the policemen on the street who told us the best way to walk; to Barbara, Lisa and Zoe for their kindness and the warmth, safety and comfort of their home. And to Sam, my brother, wherever you are, I thank you for being such a mensch.

## Lillian Valle-Santiago

Administrative Assistant, Dean’s Office

I don’t wish to recollect all I saw on September 11th other than to say that the horror and pain of it was reflected in everyone’s eyes.

My utmost concern after ascertaining that my husband and daughter were safe was to connect with my son Ryan, who was in school on 18th St. Connect is too simple a word, it was a physical need, I felt it as a thundering in my heart. The walk to the school was amazingly quiet, I don't know if the hundreds of people on the street were stunned silent or if my own thoughts weren't allowing sound to penetrate. People were clustered around parked cars listening to radio reports, in front of St. Vincent's Hospital there was a wall of women and men in white and green gowns waiting for ambulances to arrive, and someone on a bullhorn was asking for blood donors. Women on 14th St. scrambled to buy comfort for their feet at a 99 cent store (the only place open). Yes, I too found a pair of red house slippers to replace my pumps. As my son and I walked toward 12th St. & FDR drive to a friend's home, F-14s(?) flew overhead and the foul odor, that lasts to this day in lower Manhattan, came from the cloud of smoke in the distance. I was thinking what comfort could I give Ryan. I knew I already had when he said, "I'm glad you came for me mom." We were both very fortunate that I was able to.

## Greg Zipes

Adjunct Professor

I work for the Department of Justice and my office is downtown, about half a mile south of the World Trade Center site. I was at my desk on the 21st floor, when I felt the strong jolt from the impact of the second plane. I didn't know anything was wrong until that time. I went down to the street and saw people in front of my building, looking up. When I saw that World Trade Center towers were on fire, I decided not to linger. I walked home, six miles. I'll never forget the people I passed screaming to no one in particular that they know people in the towers, and the paper falling like confetti from the force of the explosions. I walked as far east as possible past the towers, past massive crowds of people transfixed in the moment, and worried that I was too close to other government buildings in case of further attacks. At about 10th Street, I learned from a person I passed that a tower had collapsed, but didn't look back. No one had any good

intimation on what was happening at the time, and the (false) rumors on the street of what was happening were truly terrifying. I heard that the White House, the Pentagon and State Department building had been destroyed, that other planes had been hijacked and that all planes flying over the United States had been ordered to land. I finally found a phone that worked and called my wife, who was working in mid-town.

My local firehouse lost nine (!) firemen. They are the true heroes. The thought never occurred to me at the time to head toward the towers to see if I could help. Now, I am dealing with the bad air quality downtown and a distinctly changed world. We now know for certain that the world is not a benign place. Thankfully, my family, friends, co-workers and students are ok.

# Recovery

[Email to and from members of the New York Law School  
community, September 11 – September 21, 2001]





TO: NYLS COMMUNITY

FROM: RA MATASAR

DATE: 9/11/2001 3:44:37 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

It is with great sadness that I write this message. As I look out of my office window I can see the smoke and debris from the Trade Towers. There is no worse feeling than the helplessness that comes from being close, but unable to help. Many of us have colleagues, family, and friends who work in the Towers. We are fearful that they may be lost, grateful for the escape of others, and thankful for the tireless efforts of the rescue workers.

Many of you have suffered a personal loss in this tragedy. Our hearts go out to you. The Law School will be working to find grief counselors to help ease your pain. To those who were here at the Law School today, thank you for your calmness in the face of chaos and for your understanding as all New Yorkers and Americans try to sort through these events.

Today, someone asked me what we, as individuals educated and trained in the law, can do. We must pray that the rule of law be followed; that we use all of the force of a mighty nation to lawfully discover those responsible for this attack; and that we use every legal means available to us as a nation to punish those responsible to the full extent of the law.

Our country and profession will be challenged in unprecedented ways. Our emotions cannot and should not be checked. Rather we must channel them to do what is right. We will be challenged by changes in our civil life—security measures, inconveniences to daily living, fear, and pleas for revenge. My hope is for our leaders to show courage, and to respond swiftly and in a measured way. For the rest of us—New Yorkers, Americans, and all members of the legal profession—let us use every tool at our disposal to help bring our community together to respond to a shared national catastrophe.

Let all of us in this community work together and come back as strongly as we can.

TO: NYLS FACULTY  
FROM: JK LIEBERMAN  
DATE: 9/12/01 5:56:18 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

This note is intended to bring you information current as of 5 pm, Wednesday, September 12, about the state of the School, the building, and our plans for reopening.

As far as we know, no faculty or staff members were physically injured in the Trade Center attack. Unhappily, we are unsure about students and alumni; though we do not at the moment have information about any individuals, we must assume that some people with ties to the School were physically injured (and many more emotionally distraught).

In that connection, may I ask every faculty member to take attendance at every class once classes resume (see below), for at least the next couple of weeks. It is important that we get as accurate a picture as we can of who has come back to School so that we can follow up on anyone who has not.

Since early evening yesterday, the School has been without phone service and electric power. The School buildings are shut, and as you know the Mayor has denied access to buildings below 14th Street. Because we do not know how long that ban will remain in effect or how long it will be before phone and electric service will be restored, all classes and other activities are canceled for Thursday and Friday. And because we had already canceled Monday and Tuesday classes for Rosh Hashanah, we currently plan to begin classes again a week from today, on Wednesday, Sept. 19. We will be on a Wednesday schedule that day.

This reopening is of course subject to change. The power outage caused our servers and website to go down. To get the latest information, therefore, please check an alternate web site, where we will be posting updates regularly. That website is <http://nyls.collegis.com>. Please note: do not use "www" after the standard <http://> opening. This web site should have links to websites with information about Manhattan driving conditions and mass transit, including subway and bus cancellations.

We have been hampered in communicating with students and other NYLS constituencies by lack of access to the building and to our network. If you are in touch with your students other than through our servers, please help out

by spreading the word about the alternate website and our intention to begin classes again on Wednesday. (Alta Levat, Geto & Demilly, and others have been working on a variety of plans to get the word out to the community.) Once phone service is restored, we will of course leave a message with details on the main number.

Since Wednesday is also a holiday for the more religiously observant, we know that many students and faculty will not come to School. If you are intending to cancel your class on Wednesday, will you please let me or Joan Fishman know immediately by reply to this email that you are canceling, and tell us whether you had already informed your class of the cancellation (I'm assuming everyone has already done so).

Please do not make any individual decision about makeup classes. We will do our best to arrive quickly at a global solution to the problem of makeups, about which at the moment there is clearly no easy answer. May I ask you all to scrupulously abide by this request and to let your students know that a global plan will be announced as soon as we have it.

We are planning now a number of meetings, sessions, and the like for students, staff, and faculty to deal with the impact of this tragedy on us as individuals and on the institution as a whole.

The deans have been meeting by conference call and plan to do so on Thursday morning at 11. If there is information you would like communicated to this group (or questions you would like raised), please let me know no later than 10:30 Thursday morning. Feel free to call me or send an e-mail.

The deans and some other administrators will be at School on Monday, assuming that power has been restored and access to the building permitted. Once access is restored, obviously anyone is free to return. If you are at School on Monday, please check in with me or Steve or Rick so that we will know who is there and can arrange meetings if we think it is necessary.

Joan Fishman has been assiduously compiling lists of non nyls-email addresses for sending out this message. There are several faculty members whom we have not been able to reach. If you know how to reach [names omitted] please email Joan by replying to this message or call her with email addresses or phone numbers. Many thanks. I hope you are all bearing up through these awful events.

TO: JR FISHMAN

FROM: ARTHUR S. LEONARD

DATE: 9/12/01 10:10:40 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Joan, I've just finished sending the info about the emergency website and classes to about 50 or so first-year evening students whose addresses happen to be in my AOL old mail file, due to their submitting assignments earlier this week. I just received back this dramatic account from one student of his experience on Tuesday [see Chaney, p. 7 above]. I don't know that this should be broadcast out of the immediate circle of NYLS administration, but it will give some idea of what we will be facing when school starts again. I don't know that this student's experience is typical, but there may be many students with similar stories, especially those evening students who are EMS, police, fire, or medical personnel.

TO: JR FISHMAN

FROM: SETH D. HARRIS

DATE: 9/13/01 10:07:31 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

I have email addresses for my research and teaching assistants, so I've asked them to pass along the web site addresses to everyone they know. Two thoughts I would like to offer before your senior staff meeting today.

1. My wife is a social worker/therapist. She suggests that there are two impulses students and others are likely to feel: (a) a need to do something helpful; and (b) sorrow and frustration that they haven't had an opportunity to talk about. She suggests that we come up with something students can do, even if it is only to buy a supportive tee-shirt ("We remember . . .") with the proceeds going to an appropriate charity. A relevant volunteer project might be better (*e.g.*, can students be trained to help local residents and business people with their dealings with government, insurance, etc.?). She also suggests that we find some constructive way to let students vent to us and one another.

2. I think it is important that we acknowledge this event in our classes and talk about it. Students will feel a strong sense that studying Torts, among other subjects, is preposterously irrelevant given what happened. We need to gently make the case that their studies are relevant. Steve and I had a preliminary discussion about this subject, but there is more to discuss.

TO: JR FISHMAN

FROM: MEG REUTER

DATE: 9/13/01 10:29:36 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Seth suggested that I send you my email address. Thank you for being the conduit. Let me know anything I can do to be helpful. I can report that my staff are fine, as are their families. I have let both know that we will be closed until Wednesday. I only know one student's phone number and I have asked her to call and email all fellow students whom she knows about the school status. Olga lives in Brooklyn and no phone traffic can get through between NJ and Brooklyn. I have only communicated to her by email. I have asked Olga to send her email address to you as well. As for Ross, I have not heard from him. Although I can get phone calls through to others in Greenwich Village, I get the same signal to his number as I do to Brooklyn. Can you please let Jethro know my home phone and email address. Thanks again for all your work, and please let me know how I can help.

TO: JK LIEBERMAN

FROM: LENNI BENSON

DATE: 9/13/2001 11:19:04 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Can you forward a message to the faculty that Mike Fahy, last year's Justice Action Center Fellow, who is also a city firefighter, is alive and has called in to his family. I know that many of our colleagues will want to know. I reached Joan today and I have sent an email to every student I had in my address book who had a non-nyls address—47 people. I am now going to write a second message to alumni because many of them are recent grads and will have friends in lower division classes. Bryan Cave is my old law firm and where Annette Gordon-Reed's husband works. You might be able to reach her through the firm.

TO: JK LIEBERMAN

FROM: L GROSBERG

DATE: 9/13/2001 11:59:08 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Gene Cerruti just called and said that Paul Dubinsky's neighbors in his building in Brooklyn Heights just called Gene to ask him if he knew where Paul is. Apparently Paul's newspapers had piled up, and nobody had heard from him for a

couple of days. If you know where he is, could you call Gene so that he can notify Paul's neighbors. Gene, like me, cannot make calls to your number. I noticed that Paul was not on your list of faculty whom you have not been able to reach. So maybe there is a quick, simple answer you can give Gene.

TO: JR FISHMAN

FROM: T ROSTAIN, FORWARDING LAURA KRAEMER'S MESSAGE TO HER

DATE: 9/13/01 12:25:00 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Dear Prof. Rostain: Thank you so much for your email. I have been just sitting in front of the TV in awe of this whole situation. I was at school when it happened and thankfully had my car in the parking lot so I was able to fly out of there as soon as I could. I was able, however, to watch the WTC as it was burning and it is an image that I will never forget. I cried all day. I was supposed to take the train into the WTC that morning and would have been there at 8:45. I decided, however, to drive that day because I just did not feel like taking the train. Someone was watching over me. Thank you again for getting in contact with us. I have been trying constantly to get information about school but have been unsuccessful. I am glad that you are okay and hopefully we will all be able to support each other through this horrific event.

TO: JR FISHMAN

FROM: T ROSTAIN, FORWARDING JENN GEBBIA'S MESSAGE TO HER

DATE: 9/13/01 12:26:36 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

I'm okay physically, emotionally I'm not so okay. I was supposed to be on the Path train at about 8:40 on Tuesday morning. I decided to stay in bed and relax until later. Your class is my first class on Tuesday so I didn't have to go in until 11:00. I didn't have a ride to the train station that morning so my Dad was going to drop me off at 7:10, which would have put me in the WTC; for some reason I told him I was tired and that I would ask someone to drive me to the train later on. There is no explanation for this. I should have been there at some point that morning; instead I was home in bed. I feel lucky that I was not there, but sad because I really should have. I haven't heard from all my friends and as far as we can tell my family is okay. I would love to help clean up, just call me or email me.

I hope all is well with your family and friends. I'm not scared about coming to the city because of terrorism. I'm afraid to see all the places I used to hang out in or go to. I have been unable to remove myself from my TV set and would love to be of some assistance to the school and anyone else who needs my help.

TO: F DEJOHN

FROM: A LEVAT

DATE: 9/13/2001 2:13:43 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

I got a call from the Westlaw rep who saw our story in the NYLJ. She has great news—they have all our students' home email addresses, except for the first-years. They have offered, and we have accepted, to send an email to our students. Rick is giving me the text. Please let Bob, Carl, and Margaret know about this.

TO: NYLS FACULTY

FROM: JK LIEBERMAN

DATE: 9/13/01 2:15:27 EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Here's Thursday's followup about the status of various issues. We don't know yet how seriously our fall semester classes will be affected. It depends in large part on how soon we can get back into our buildings. If we get back in, as we hope, next Monday, the impact on our courses will be relatively minimal. If there is a longer delay, we will need to consider moving classes off site, holding weekend classes, moving exams into January, or some combination of these, and perhaps other, possibilities. It's premature to think in detail through this problem. I propose that we consider it at our faculty meeting scheduled a week from this coming Monday, which I am hopeful we will convene, whether or not we can get into our building. Several schools have offered us the use of space, and with the help of Steve and others I hope to have alternative plans to present.

Whoever is able to come to School on Monday, if the building is open, should come. Many students are anxious to get back and will doubtless be there, and the stronger a staff and faculty presence, the better. Both for the mental health of the community, and for the future of the School, it really is vital for students to see us united and resolutely determined to carry out. Likewise, recognizing that Tuesday is a religious holiday for many and for some of you Wednesday as well,



I urge whoever is not celebrating Rosh Hashanah on Wednesday next week to plan to be at School. We are putting together an all-day event in the Stiefel Room, and it would be good for as many as possible to spend an hour or so there to talk, meet with students, and otherwise participate. You should begin now to think about what you might say to students, as a group or individually. (We are talking to Judith Rosenberger and others about how we can best help students, and ourselves, confront the pain.) It would be a big help if you could let Steve or me know when you might be available to participate in the event on Wednesday.

On a separate note, we are beginning to get some incredible email accounts from students about what they saw on Tuesday. The deans talked today about the possibility of preparing a commemorative volume of some sort about these terrible events, and it would be wonderful if as many of you as have the energy to do so could keep notes of what you have been seeing, hearing, and feeling.

Attached to this email should be a list of faculty email addresses so that we can talk to each other to the widest extent possible. Please feel free to call me at home at any time with questions, issues, and ideas. The deans will be conferencing Friday at 11, so again if there are questions or issues you'd like to raise, please contact me, Steve, Rick, or any of the others as soon as you can.

TO: THE DEANS

FROM: M PERLEY

DATE: 9/13/2001 6:47:36 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

I have been working behind the scenes to find a way to redirect our web address to another server and believe I have succeeded. We will know by morning. Thanks to Alta, who said something yesterday that triggered something in my memory, I believe we have a workaround. I was not at all sure that I would be able to convince our ISP to redirect traffic to a different IP number, because, according to the internic rules, they were prohibited from doing this. They are our secondary domain server. Only the primary server (NYLS) can request this action. Which is why I responded to Alta yesterday that it couldn't be done. However, about 3 weeks ago, I updated our profile with our ISP and made a change that made them our technical contact. As our technical contact, in an emergency, they could act in our stead. I counted on them interpreting this the same way I

had. And they did. It will take from 8 to 12 hours for the master servers (internic) to update their information that will pick up the changes. Hopefully, this will be done by morning. Anyone accessing [www.nyls.edu](http://www.nyls.edu) will be pointed to a server at Collegis in Florida which has a copy of our website on it. Alta will be able to add anything necessary through Carl Scott, who heads the web services group. If there are any changes to this message, I will keep you updated.

TO: THE DEANS

FROM: F DEJOHN

DATE: 9/13/2001 9:10:57 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Here are the details for Friday's conference call. Dial in number [omitted]. Conference code [omitted]. George, Don, Margaret, and Alta will be making a foray to the buildings, hopefully joined by Sui-ki, Mike & Lenny from Don's staff and reps from I-lite electric. Alta is retrieving some materials. Margaret will see about the condition of the servers, George will check on the T-1 and Don is bringing a larger generator than the one we already have and were planning to use. The larger generator is a trailer type that would have to be left on the sidewalk and connected from there. It has the advantage of being large enough to power up more than our current generator and thus saves us from having to make another purchase and dragging both generators up the stairs. By tomorrow we may have our servers back up but we will see. Meanwhile, as you know, Margaret and Collegis are likely to succeed in pointing our current url to a collegis-hosted copy of our web site. If successful, that will give us immediate web presence even if we fail in bringing up our servers. HOWEVER, even if successful it would be important to use the generator to bring up our server so we could restore email service.

George is also continuing to work on the 800 number.

Alta—in your dealing with the Geto folks please let them know that I have now seen and heard announcements on TV/radio for schools that have less relationship to ground zero than we do. Several schools have been able to get announcements to “students who might have been working at or near the WTC—please email the school at . . .” Ethan should be able to do the same for us, especially given our proximity to the site. Talk to you all in the morning.

TO: THE DEANS  
FROM: S HARRIS  
DATE: 9/14/2001 10:02:32 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

I have one thought about a volunteer project for our students. A large number of people will lose their jobs, or face temporary layoffs, as a result of the devastating effect on businesses in or near the WTC. I wonder if we could work together with the Unemployment Action Center to set up or staff an existing information/assistance center for those workers who need help filing or fighting their claims. I don't know anyone at the UAC, but Carlin or Art may.

TO: NYLS COMMUNITY  
FROM: DEAN MATASAR  
DATE: 9/14/2001 2:14:53 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Members of the New York Law School Community: Our world has been shattered. All of us have suffered incalculable losses—of family, friends, colleagues, and fellow citizens. The peace that we have come to expect as our birthright has been broken, perhaps forever. Nothing any of us can say or do can restore what was; we only can look forward and do what we can to come back stronger than ever. Our Mayor certainly has it right: Americans and New Yorkers are tough and compassionate people, dedicated to moving forward, rebuilding, and safeguarding our democratic values even in the face of the most difficult challenges.

The New York Law School family has many difficult days ahead, but we are fully dedicated to resuming our students' education as soon as possible, and to sharing our expertise with those who need our help. As distraught as our academic community is, we have come through these events in much better shape than others. It is our job to do what we can to help.

As most of you know by now, we have been without power, Internet access, and phone service since late afternoon on that horrific day of September 11. We have established a temporary Web site at <http://nyls.collegis.com>. Until we can resume our normal means of communication this will be the best way to find out about the law school. Please check our site frequently. If you would like to speak to me personally, I can be reached at [omitted] or by email at [omitted]. We must be here for each other in this time of great need!

Friends, I have been meeting daily off-campus with the senior administration of the law school and our trustees. Our Student Life office has been calling student leaders; we have visited our students at the dormitory; and we are in constant contact with our faculty. New York Law School will do everything it can to respond to this crisis. We will do what we do best: use our classrooms to address every legal and moral issue raised by this cowardly attack. We will become a forum for our neighborhood. We will offer our legal expertise to those directly affected by this tragedy who may have nowhere else to turn. Every member of our community will need a sense of security and our school will be a haven for us all.

What separates our society from others is our extraordinary commitment to the rule of law. Over the next few months our most cherished beliefs will be challenged. We must resolve to double our efforts (and then double them again) to bring order out of chaos and use very legal means to find and then punish those responsible. More fundamentally, as members of a helping profession, we must do all we can to bring our community back as strong as ever. I often say that at New York Law School we “Learn Law and then Take Action.” Now is our time to do both.

TO: THE FACULTY

FROM: JK LIEBERMAN

DATE: 9/14/2001 2:54:36 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

After a conference call today among the deans, we have decided that we cannot sensibly plan to have classes next week. Therefore, we are tentatively setting Monday, Sept. 24, as the first day of classes. Obviously, that date continues to depend on access to the building and full power being restored.

The Library does have power now. A group including Margaret, George, and Don met and have reported that the air quality seems good and the building appears structurally sound. Nothing is broken, nor is anything apparently amiss in the immediately surrounding area. Building engineers are scheduled to assess more systematically early next week to give us what we assume will be a clean bill of health. Don is setting up a generator that might help power up the servers and give us access to vital records.

Assuming that access is permitted to the area by Monday, the deans and senior

staff are planning to meet at 10:30 in the Library to gather records and develop plans. We will hold a separate meeting at 1 pm for all faculty who care to join us. The meeting is certainly not mandatory, but we know that many people are eager to begin talking about how we are dealing with the situation and we will begin that conversation then.

If access to the area is not permitted, we will hold both meetings, the 10:30 am meeting for senior staff and the 1 pm meeting for faculty, at Rick's apartment.

In addition, we have tentatively scheduled a faculty and senior staff meeting for next Thursday beginning at 11:00 in the Library (or at a site to be determined if we are not allowed access). Dr. Judith Rosenberger, our school psychological consultant, will be present to talk with us about our concerns and our plans for providing services to students.

The deans will next be talking as a group Sunday evening at 7 pm and if there is any change we'll try to get at least email word out to you after that.

TO: S ELLMANN, JR FISHMAN, JK LIEBERMAN

FROM: DEAN MATASAR

DATE: 9/14/2001 7:58:53 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

As you probably know, the law school phone system seems to be up and running. We've changed the main message on 2100—directing folks to the alternate Collegis web site. You might want to check your voice mail and change your message. In addition, Alta is working to upload several new pages to the web site. We will post my message to the students as well as Jethro's to the faculty. Moreover, we have had the engineers at the building and they have given us a clean bill of health. We will also put that info on the site. Try to rest a bit this weekend. We'll need every bit of energy for next week. RM

TO: THE DEANS

FROM: F DEJOHN

DATE: 9/14/2001 8:16:35 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

I am very pleased to report that the generator is working, after many hours of effort. The T1 lines appear to be operational and Sui-ki is working on bringing the servers back up. Meanwhile, we HAVE phone service. George has placed a new

outgoing message on x2100 and you can actually reach it by direct dial! George will keep the message updated on a daily basis—and will continue to steer callers to our emergency web site until our own site is back up (when our site DOES come back, we should make a point of listing the collegis Emergency URL and asking people to jot it down just in case we experience any further technical problems with our site [in the future we need to include this emergency URL in all our Student.Staff handouts for such eventualities.]

I dialed the 2100 number and connected to my email—my archived messages were still there but there were no new messages—I think, however, that is because our phones were experiencing problems on Tuesday even before we lost power. I also called my extension and my greeting was still there—I left a message and was able to retrieve it. So we are back in the telecommunications business.

Next step is the server and I will advise as soon as I hear from them.

I also understand that there were structural folks who were there and indicated we were fine. Plus, I am told that the subway is running under us—and that is something the Mayor said would only be done after being sure that the buildings above the subway lines were stable.

That's all for now.

TO: THE DEANS

FROM: F DEJOHN

DATE: 9/15/2001 8:41:40 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Of course you knew this would happen! At midnight last time I saw on TV that the streetlights in our area had suddenly come back on. I immediately called the school and learned that the power had just come back to our building! I spoke to Don this morning and we will keep the generator going through the weekend because we need to get the electricians back in to reverse everything that was done yesterday.

Despite our efforts yesterday and the return of power generally, our web site is still down. From what George reports it seems that the T1 used by our ISP is connected to that ill-fated West Street Station which is keeping phones down at 40 Worth.

So until we find another solution we will probably continue our previous efforts to repaint our web site.

TO: FACULTY AND STAFF

FROM: DEAN MATASAR

DATE: SATURDAY, 9/15/2001 9:10:45 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Colleagues:

I am writing to you after my visit to the law school today. There are many emotions I could share—about the sense of dedication of every fire fighter and police officer I met, the exhaustion etched on the faces of the construction workers, the strangeness of TriBeCa without the Towers looming in the background. It will be hard for us to return to our home, but thankfully our place is in excellent condition.

I found the buildings in excellent condition. We have power, the phone lines are up, and we have a guard on site. Moreover, Don and his crew, and George and his crew have done a wonderful job of getting us up and running. Late Friday we had a structural engineer visit the building. He has given us a good report—the building has suffered no structural damage. The City seems to have confirmed this as well, since they are running the subway once again under the buildings.

Some of you have wondered about air quality. To this point, we are relying on reports from the city and the federal government that have said that air quality is safe in TriBeCa. The only place that people are wearing masks is directly at the debris site. While I am comfortable going back into the building, I understand that some of you may be nervous—especially about possible asbestos problems. We will try to get an independent test done, but it is not clear when this can be accomplished.

Many of our students have written and called me. They are thankful for your care and concern (and amazed that we seem to care about them). They have a million questions about their courses and the schedule. I hope that we will address many of these at our meeting on Monday.

Stay strong. We have some tough days ahead, but we will certainly do everything it takes to make our school stronger and help our neighborhood move forward.

RM

TO: AREA CLINICIANS

FROM: S ELLMANN

DATE: 9/16/2001 11:31:39 AM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Dear Friends:

While there are many things that we may want to do in response to last week's attacks, from contributing to benefit funds to changing our course curricula, we as lawyers, and (many of us) as clinical law teachers, may have a special role to play in providing legal services to those who have suffered and who must now put their lives back together.

I'm writing to each of you from home to invite you to meet at New York Law School on Friday of this week (Sept. 21) at 1:00 to brainstorm about what we might do and how we might organize the doing of it. (Obviously the time and place both are contingent on events, and I will keep you posted about any changes in this plan.) Since bar groups are already thinking about these same questions, I hope to reach representatives of these groups as well, and to invite them to join us.

While I will try to do a more inclusive e-mail invitation from school soon, in the meantime I'd appreciate it very much if each of you would distribute this invitation to any of your colleagues who you think might be interested (including people at any schools I may have missed by mistake). If you can let me know how many people from your school will be coming, that will also be a great help; if we are a smallish group, we can simply meet as we do for the clinical theory workshops, but if we are going to be larger, we should probably plan for small-group discussions, report-backs, etc. (Assistance with that planning will be welcome!)

Meanwhile, I hope all of you, and your families and friends, are safe and well.

TO: JR FISHMAN

FROM: A STUDENT SHATTERED

DATE: 9/16/01 12:19:19 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Hello, I am a student in his first year at NYLS. I am very concerned and afraid of going back to class at NYLS as early as the twenty-fourth. The horror and panic that I experienced during that frightful morning on my way to school will never



be forgotten. I am trying to keep hope that my cousin will be found, but every second I just keep thinking is another second without water or food; it is so tough to be strong here and just pick up and start going as though normal. I just lost track trying to stay safe, people on my bus were turning on one another and there was a lot of panic. (We watched this happen.)

I really don't know what to think about school. I have no books anymore and just feel like these terrorists have taken so much that I love away. I am afraid they may strike us again.

How am I supposed to function without my books? More importantly, how is my family supposed to function knowing that the threat to New York still exists, as proved by the FBI Director's evidence, and we are back in School. Can we possibly focus on normalcy while our walk to the building includes passing the war zone all around us? I hope I can make it, I hope we can all make it, but there must be an extremely high caliber of assistance from our School Community. I have been reading the book that I have on Torts, truthfully I don't know why, maybe to try to get my mind off of what appears to be the inception of World War III. I think that the school should donate either books to the students like me who might have lost their belongings during the attack while fleeing or otherwise trying to get home, or unlimited copy cards good for the rest of the semester so that we can copy our readings. I also think that to not hold a large meeting at the beginning of the start of School on the 24th is a mistake, and to not involve us the students in meeting before the start of these classes is another mistake. This is going to be hard I know it is, we cannot just be expected to dust off, place our families' concern aside and at the same time sustain the pressure of law studies successfully. You all know that we are all going to be a mess, there isn't a day I am "normal" lately. Our building still stands but our hearts as students are at ground zero. Be conscious of this above all. Please write me back. I haven't heard from anyone.

TO: JK LIEBERMAN

FROM: A STUDENT WITH A QUESTION

DATE: 9/16/2001 4:46:58 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Sorry to bother you, but I just had a quick logistical question with regard to

missed assignments. The emergency web site indicates that “no parts of the syllabi will be skipped.” In light of that fact, how are we to handle assignments which have not yet been distributed and are now due or which will become due shortly? For example, assignments for Legal Reasoning, Writing, & Research.

Please advise, thanks.

TO: NYLS COMMUNITY

FROM: RA MATASAR

DATE: 9/17/2001 6:29:17 PM EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

Colleagues, leaving the Law School today I was bursting with conflicting emotions. I am so grateful to be part of a wonderful community of faculty and staff. So many of you found your way to the city and then to the Law School. I am proud of our commitment to give our students everything they deserve, to take account of their educational AND emotional needs, to do everything we can to help our neighbors and our city. At the same time, I am angry about the many serious inconveniences that we will face in getting back to normal, disgusted with the few sick individuals in our city who are interfering with the police and fire fighters, and worried about the many things that we cannot make right and the impossibility of making whole those irreparably harmed by the terrorists' acts.

For me these many thoughts are compounded during the high holidays. Walking into services through metal detectors with a significant police presence reinforces the conclusion that all is not right. Yet, reading texts that go back through the ages about the need for peace in our times and the need for personal accountability reminds me that none of us who has survived is completely a victim unless we choose to let ourselves fall into despair; none of us is fated to a future of someone else's making when we have the power to influence future events.

Thus, I leave this day with yet another emotion; determination that we come together as a community, press ourselves to accomplish all that we are capable of accomplishing, and create a future for ourselves and our students that will be vibrant and aware of our own power to make change. I look forward to working with all of you to take our place (and all of us as individuals) to the next level.

FROM: STEVE ELLMANN

TO: ATTENDEES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE SEPTEMBER 11 LAW SCHOOL PRO BONO COORDINATING COMMITTEE , HELD ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2001, AT NEW YORK LAW SCHOOL.

*Minutes of the meeting* [note: phone numbers are omitted in this version]

On Friday, Sept. 21, over 40 people, from 8 bar and public interest groups and 10 law schools, met at New York Law School to discuss the legal needs created by the World Trade Center attacks and the contributions that law schools could make to meeting those needs. A list of the people who attended the meeting, and the organizations of which they are part, and their contact information, is attached. Steve Ellmann from NYLS chaired the meeting, and drafted these minutes, which also include some additional information gathered outside the meeting, with very helpful input from Vanessa Merton of Pace. (Any corrections or additions are welcome, and I apologize to anyone whose contributions aren't reflected in this draft.)

Our goal in this meeting was not to reach unanimity on a single set of actions to be taken, but to understand what needs to be done and to foster some measure of coordinated action and consensus about potential responses. We agreed that continued coordination was important, and we constituted ourselves as the "September 11 Law School Pro Bono Coordinating Committee" to which new members are welcome.

A. What legal needs exist:

We began with comments from bar and public interest representatives about the needs they saw, and the programs already under way to meet them. There were extended comments from Maria Imperial of the City Bar Fund, and from 3 representatives of the Legal Aid Society, as well as valuable contributions from several others. Then a number of people from law schools suggested additional areas needing attention.

(1) Bar organization activities:

Maria Imperial of the City Bar Fund reported that the City Bar has established a volunteer number for lawyers and a legal referral number. So far, 300 lawyers had volunteered but there had not been that many calls for legal assistance yet. (Most of the calls so far had been for landlord-tenant matters.) As of Friday, Sept.

21, 10 days after the attacks, it seemed that people affected by the attacks were not yet thinking about their legal needs. But there was some work to be done in notarizing crime victim assistance forms, and a table had been established at the city's Family Assistance Center. (Volunteer lawyers at the Family Assistance Center are now helping survivors to obtain expedited death certificates.) For families, the City Bar plans to establish a "facilitator model," in which a lawyer will do a legal inventory of the needs of an individual or family harmed by the attacks, and will be able to turn to expert panels for mentoring on any complicated legal issues uncovered.

Meanwhile, there will also be assistance for small businesses. Here too there had not yet been an outpouring of need, but the Empire State Development Corporation planned to run two sites for giving advice, and on Saturday, Sept. 22 a team from one law firm planned to answer questions.

The City Bar plans training for family case facilitators for October 2, and for small business advisors on October 3. It also plans to develop lists of frequently asked questions, and their answers, for use in the process.

Maria Imperial also confirmed that the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established a hotline, through which clients can get referred to attorneys. A principal difference between the ABA/FEMA approach and the City Bar's approach is the holistic facilitator emphasis in the City Bar's plans. (Jonathan Bing is the New York coordinator for this effort [the ABA/FEMA]. Calls to the hotline go to a screening center, currently in Connecticut, which takes down the caller's information and forwards it to a state representative and through that representative to a volunteer lawyer panel; all representation is without fee.)

Jon Hyman of Rutgers (Newark) Law School reported that the New Jersey State Bar has only begun to talk about what it might do, and has reached out to the City Bar. The New Jersey State Bar's website, as of Sept. 25, reflects that the bar has established a toll-free number for victims to call.

## (2) Public interest law groups' activities

Danny Greenberg of the Legal Aid Society described the needs the Society has encountered. Most of the victims of the attacks didn't live in the WTC area, and

so there has already been work to be done in the other boroughs. There are some legal needs already, but, more broadly, Legal Aid is very concerned about the many possible harms that their usual clients may face, and that other clients a notch more prosperous than usual Legal Aid clients, until the attacks and the economic harm that followed, may also face, all in a context of funding cuts for legal services by the legislatures. Su Sokol of Legal Services for NYC similarly emphasized that the regular work of poverty law practice needs help. One significant issue, as Danny Greenberg said (as did Bryan Pu-Folkes of NY Lawyers for the Public Interest), may be the allocation of disaster funds, including allocation of funds to support provision of legal services to poor people.

It seems possible, in short, that the greatest public interest law needs may not be for the survivors' families, but for the many other people, already in need or more indirectly injured by the WTC attacks, who may be overlooked in the focus on the attacks themselves. Moreover, it seems likely that these needs will emerge not immediately but 3–4 months from now, as Steve Banks of Legal Aid said, when, for example, mortgage or rent arrears build up or unemployment runs out. (Although Legal Aid needs law students, as Steve Banks and Marlene Halpern of Legal Aid both indicated, Steve mentioned that Legal Aid currently has no room for them. Legal Aid itself has lost the use of its offices at 90 Church Street, across the street from the WTC.)

There are a range of potential issues that may flow from the attacks. The following list includes several areas identified by Steve Banks of Legal Aid, as well as others:

(A) the needs of undocumented people, and of the survivors of undocumented people, such as restaurant workers. A number of people raised aspects of this concern, which seems likely to be a pressing issue in the coming months. Maria Imperial reported that immigrants may be hesitant to use the services at the Family Assistance Center, because the INS also has a presence there. Bryan Pu-Folkes also emphasized the need to identify people who might be in need but not seeking help because of immigration concerns; and Jim Williams of the National Employment Law Center also emphasized the need for student help in working on the problems of undocumented workers. Some immigrants may want to seek naturalization, as Lenni Benson of NYLS has heard; others may face

immigration issues after the loss of a citizen spouse or an employer sponsor, as Vanessa Merton notes. A related concern is the possibility, already a reality, of anti-Muslim/Arab violence.

(B) unemployment resulting from the attacks, for example among janitors and restaurant workers. Jim Williams of NELP also emphasized the need for help on unemployment insurance issues. Vanessa Merton points out the importance of access to training and/or jobs programs, and Liz Gonchar Hempstead discussed the thinking NOW Legal Defense is doing about the possible need for non-traditional employment training for people who have been dislocated, and the organization's preparation of materials on child care workers' eligibility for disaster assistance. Particular unions whose members have been killed, or made jobless, may need direct assistance; so may any unions which have themselves lost space (DC 37's member legal services program is, I understand, in a building that is currently shut off).

(C) eligibility for mortgage and rent money under FEMA; this in turn is part of a larger area of services to people who are homeless or facing homelessness as a result of the attacks and their economic after-effects. One particular set of potential clients who were mentioned are people whose names weren't on the leases for the apartments in which they live.

(D) insurance issues, including workers compensation issues, Social Security claims, and others. Health care may also be an issue; one aspect of this may be, as Vanessa Merton mentions, the need to help survivors obtain or continue health insurance.

(E) Vanessa Merton (Pace), Maria Imperial (City Bar) and Matthew Wilkes (New York Law School) all provided information about the crime victim funds now being made available.

Maria Imperial commented that in general the forms are not complex, and that the Crime Victims Board is currently being very generous. Moreover, these funds are evidently available even to undocumented immigrants. But it does appear that there is a role for students in simply helping people to fill out these forms (and volunteers, including students, can contact Safe Horizons to assist). Vanessa Merton suggested that there may be a need for advocacy, and even for professional psychiatric expertise, to obtain crime victim funds for harms less

obvious than physical injuries or property loss, such as emotional suffering. Since our meeting, the Red Cross has also announced the rapid availability of substantial cash grants; there may well turn out to be a need to make sure that the various grants that are available are coordinated and that eligibility for or receipt of one source of aid does not unfairly limit eligibility for other sources.

(F) tax issues, even for people of very modest incomes. For example, Vanessa Merton points out the need to help people analyze and calculate their casualty losses for income tax purposes.

(G) food stamps, and indeed all the existing benefit programs, may be important issues for people facing newly acute economic needs as a result of the attacks.

### (3) Suggestions from law faculty

(A) Karen Gross of New York Law School suggested several financial areas in which needs are likely to arise, including bankruptcies; debt collection & creditor behavior; and financial literacy training, for the people, many of them women, who have now suddenly become heads of household and may have no experience handling financial affairs. She has already worked on many of these issues, with the Legal Aid Society and through an independent foundation.

(B) Bill LaPiana of New York Law School discussed wills & estates issues. He commented that presumably the courts will accept some expedited alternative to the usual methods of obtaining a death certificate (as noted above, a program to produce these certificates, utilizing volunteer lawyers, is now underway). What will be needed next, he said, remains to be seen, but survivors, in particular poor survivors, may face various problems, including simply navigating in Surrogates' Court. Assistance to people appearing pro se in that court may be needed. Survivors will also need assistance in establishing their own will & estate plans, including, for example, with stand-by guardianship provisions.

(C) Vanessa Merton points out the potential for family law issues. Some children may have been placed in foster care after the loss of a parent in a single-parent household. Some adults may have taken on care responsibilities without formal legal authority. These and other needs may require lawyers' help. B. What can law schools do?

(1) Collecting information on resources available: Getting centralized and accessible information of this sort may be the most important thing we can do at

this time. Sue Bryant of CUNY and Danny Greenberg both mentioned this need. Two things are needed to accomplish this: an effort by law schools to identify the resources—the people and their skills—available, and a place to put this information so that public interest groups can take advantage of it.

Accomplishing the task of assembling information will mean that faculty and/or administrators at each school will need to take it on. Students who are available as volunteers (staff might also play this role) or as externs or otherwise will need to be identified, and their special skills (e.g., foreign language skills) identified; faculty will need to be asked for their availability and expertise. As Vanessa Merton & Sue Bryant emphasized, each school's dean should be encouraged to assign these tasks, ideally on a permanent basis, since such coordination will be of value long after this crisis, and give recognition for their performance.

To the extent that law schools become the initiators of various programs (on the lines sketched below, or otherwise), this coordinator could facilitate and oversee these programs as well.

Once the information is assembled, where should it go? At this moment there appear to be two answers, and potential volunteers (or volunteer coordinators) should probably use both.

One is to refer volunteers to the City Bar; Laren Spirer of [probono.net](http://probono.net) reports that an effort is being made to centralize pro bono work through the Bar. The other is to make use of two websites, [www.probono.net](http://www.probono.net) and [www.lawhelp.org](http://www.lawhelp.org), which plan to post information on volunteers' availability and organizations' needs, and to post information for potential clients. A third site may also be planning a similar role; this is [www.pslawnet.org](http://www.pslawnet.org), which is a site maintained by the Public Service Law Network Worldwide, a consortium of many law schools and public-interest law groups. (The director of this network is Leslie Platt, whose e-mail is [Leslie.Platt@nyu.edu](mailto:Leslie.Platt@nyu.edu)). Laren Spirer, Su Sokol and Vicki Eastus all spoke about the role that these websites could play in getting information out to those who need it. ("Lawhelp" is particularly aimed at low-income people, as Su Sokol mentioned.) Law students can work on maintaining these sites themselves, and on FAQ sheets for them, as Laren Spirer told us. (Both sites already have begun posting September 11th-related information.) Another method which will take more organization was suggested by Marcia Levy of



Rutgers, who pointed out the value of holding a pro bono recruitment fair for the New York area.

Ideally, the organizations and web-sites collecting information on the resources schools can make available would also collect information on the needs that public interest groups and their clients have. Providing information on needs, as well as on resources, could make it much easier for a two-way flow of ideas to go on.

(2) Re-placing externs: Some students, perhaps 5–10 at each of a number of schools, had externships in the World Trade Center, and now need new placements. Groups needing such students should contact schools directly and/or post their needs on [www.probono.net](http://www.probono.net). This needs to be done right away, since the students in question need new placements for this semester.

(3) Student employees (mentioned by Su Sokol). Schools are eligible for, and may already be receiving, substantial amounts of work-study money from the federal government.

Although normally the employer of a work-study student must pay a small fraction of the student's total wage, schools may be able to pay this portion out of their own funds if the students' employers cannot. It's also possible that this requirement of limited matching payments could be waived for jobs related to the WTC attacks; and/or that disaster funds might be available for this purpose. This is a potential long-term resource, but it is also an area where quick action is needed, because there are probably substantial numbers of students who have lost work-study or other jobs as a direct result of the attacks, and they too need new jobs (and income) without delay.

(4) Re-directing (or creating) clinics: Because it appears that legal needs will grow overtime, law schools may want to establish new clinics, or re-focus existing ones, to meet WTC-related needs. New York Law School, for example, is prepared to re-focus its existing Civil and Human Rights Clinic to train law students, under faculty supervision, to function as "facilitators" in the City Bar's individual & family services program. There may be other curricular changes that schools could make, as Sue Bryant pointed out, to create courses training students in the areas where their help may be needed. Obviously, schools need to plan now for changes that would be implemented next semester.

(5) Developing focused training and programs: Schools where faculty have expertise can develop organized training for students (or others) and programs in which that training is put to work, even outside of formal law school clinics. One example from this meeting was the financial literacy work which Karen Gross of New York Law School has done; another possibility, suggested after the meeting by Lenni Benson of NYLS, would be training students to assist people with naturalization papers. Some law schools may also be able to bring interdisciplinary expertise to bear; Vanessa Merton (Pace) and Ellen Yaroshefsky (Cardozo) mentioned this feature of their respective schools. Law schools, as Sue Bryant said, will need to know whom to partner with in these efforts.

Who should take the initiative in developing such programs—the schools or the public interest/legal services groups? On this point, which wasn't discussed in detail, one answer may be (as Su Sokol suggested) that in general, law schools should not try to undertake responsibility for training students to fit the public interest programs' needs; rather, the programs will want to know who's available, and then to select and train people to fit their needs precisely. Probably programs, rather than schools, would train students to play such roles as screening cases or even providing advice to clients who must do self-help.

But this is probably not always the right answer. Where law schools have expertise and have themselves identified client needs, then the initiative in shaping the programs may need to come from them. One important task for program developers, or school coordinators, will be to find the agencies in the community with whom to develop links.

(6) Providing space, etc.: New York Law School (Steve Ellmann) and Cardozo (Ellen Yaroshefsky) both offered space; the Legal Aid Society has also been able to use space at many area law schools for criminal defense intake, during these weeks. In some circumstances, schools may be able to help in other very practical ways as well, for example by making computers or fax machines available.

(7) Public education: Vanessa Merton and Ellen Yaroshefsky have both pointed out that law schools have a role to play in public education about the issues we now face as a result of the WTC attacks. Bryan Pu-Folkes similarly pointed out that law schools can respond to the possibilities of onerous, anti-immigrant laws and infringements of civil liberties.

(8) Encouraging students to volunteer (Sue Bryant): Students may simply volunteer, or at some schools (e.g. Pace, as Vanessa Merton reported), they may have mandatory pro bono obligations which they can discharge this way. Whether volunteering is optional or required, one function for schools is to make sure that their students (and faculty and staff) are aware of what is needed and how they can contribute—especially since volunteers may be more needed months from now when today’s intense desires to help out have somewhat faded. This in turn makes it important for information on what is needed to be as readily available as possible (see B(1)above).

(9) “Amicus” and writing roles:

(A) Law schools themselves, and/or their deans, may have a role to play in advocating for attention to the needs, including legal needs, of those who are otherwise at risk of being overlooked even in the midst of all the relief efforts. To play this role, schools need to know what these needs are, and the City Bar is hosting a meeting of law school deans on Friday, Sept. 28.

(B) There may be many policy issues concerning the allocation of relief funds, and law school faculty, potentially with student assistance, may be able to contribute in this respect in a relatively traditional way through writing and signing memos or letters, essentially on the lines of amicus briefs in litigation.

(C) Schools may also be able to help in the writing, and/or the production, of manuals for legal workers and/or clients. Maria Imperial and Liz Goncher Hempstead both mentioned the adaptation of existing materials (for instance, on hate crimes) to current needs.

(10) Small business aid: This point seems worth particular emphasis, though in our meeting it was not a central concern (except in the context of Maria Imperial’s discussion of the City Bar’s small business advice efforts). Law schools generally have more expertise in business issues than in poverty law issues, and existing public interest law groups are relatively less likely to focus on these issues than on the concerns of people in even greater need. There may be special value, therefore, in law schools’ developing programs to meet needs in this area.

#### PARTICIPANTS

Thanks to all who participated, and to others who have already helped or offered to help with this work, including Bryan Adamson (Case Western), Ellen Chapnick

(Columbia), Laura Cohen (Rutgers-Newark), Nancy Cook (Cornell), Larry Grosberg (NYLS), Seth Harris (NYLS), Deborah Howard (Law School Consortium Project), Peter Joy (Washington Univ.), Carrie Kass (Quinnipiac), Mary Helen McNeal (Montana), Carlin Meyer (NYLS), David Moss (Wayne State), Michael Perlin (NYLS), Meg Reuter (NYLS), Marjorie Silver (Touro), Ian Weinstein (Fordham) and all those who announced this meeting to their colleagues.

#### LAW SCHOOLS

American University: Dave Chavkin  
Brooklyn Law School: Stacy Caplow  
Cardozo Law School: Ellen Yaroshefsky  
City University of New York School of Law: Sue Bryant, Pam Goldberg  
Fordham University School of Law: Michael W. Martin, Tom Schoenherr, Gemma Solimene  
Hofstra Law School: Dale I. Frederick  
New York Law School: Mohamad Adel Akbik (student), Lenni Benson, Carol Buckler, Gene Cerruti, Pam Champine, Steve Ellmann, Karen Gross, Mariana Hogan, Bill LaPiana, Rick Marsico, Rick Matasar (Dean), Sadiq Reza, Richard Sherwin, Matthew Wilkes  
New York University Law School: Vicki Eastus, Paula Galowitz  
Pace Law School: Vanessa Merton  
Rutgers Law School: Jon Hyman, Marcia Levy

#### BAR AND PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS (AND OTHERS):

Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law: Nancy Northup, David Udell  
City Bar Fund: Akira Arroyo, Maria Imperial  
Legal Aid Society of New York: Steve Banks, Danny Greenberg, Marlene Halpern, Scott Rosenberg  
Legal Services for NYC: Su Sokol  
National Employment Law Project: Jim Williams  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest: Bryan Pu-Folkes  
NOW Legal Defense Fund: Liz Gonchar Hempstead  
Probono.net: Laren Spierer  
Sullivan & Cromwell: Robert MacCrate  
University Business (magazine): Amy Rosenberg

**Email in this section came from the following people (names are in alphabetical order). Identification is as of September 2001.**

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# Reminiscences

[Accounts are printed in alphabetical order; identification  
is as of September 11, 2001]



## Paul S. Adler

Adjunct Professor

I was walking to a business appointment in mid-town on September 11th when a fire engine came racing down Fifth Avenue. It seemed to be traveling at a speed that was even more urgent than usual (but that may be my post-event imagination at work). I looked at the engine and then off in the distance I suddenly noticed huge clouds of white smoke billowing on the skyline. Because of the angle of the smoke, and the fact that the truck was from a mid-town house, I thought that whatever was going on was going on relatively nearby. And because I only saw white smoke I thought that it couldn't be anything too serious.

Only when I arrived at my destination, an office building near St. Patrick's Cathedral, did I learn that a plane had crashed into one of the World Trade Center towers. Even then, being of a certain age, my thoughts immediately went back to the plane that had once flown into the Empire State Building, in the 1940's—the result of a navigational error that had taken some life, but still was an accident. I hadn't left the building lobby when someone said that a second plane had flown into the other tower. Of course, we knew then that this was no error.

In the hours and days that immediately followed I was struck by two disconnects. The first disconnect was the glorious weather against which this horror took place. Each day seemed to be nicer than the next. Great flying weather. It is naive, of course, to think that ugly things can't happen against a pretty backdrop, but this was a display of nature that we expect only in Norman Rockwell canvases showing office workers sitting outside eating their lunch, pick-up Frisbee game in the park and other benign pursuits. But here, in the middle of a run of sublime September days, hostile people (whose hostility we do not yet fully comprehend) had shattered mighty buildings and thousands of lives. It was simply too incongruous to register.

The second disconnect was the sense of physical distance from all the death and destruction. My wife and I could stand on our apartment balcony, perhaps three miles away from the WTC, and see the haze rising up from where the buildings had been, and occasionally smell the smoke and burning.



Yet all around us everything was the same as the day before the attacks. We were surrounded by all the same familiar buildings and familiar life that had existed prior to the planes flying into those buildings. If you hadn't been told, hadn't seen the television pictures, you would not know that a small city in our midst had been destroyed, with appalling loss of life, because the larger city around it looked no different. That downtown scene could have been on the moon, for those of us lived just a few miles away. Except for that little patch downtown, it was the same physical city.

That feeling of physical distance contrasted, of course, with the emotional closeness expressed by quieter streets, thinner traffic, emptier stores, a disrupted subway, a less ebullient, even stunned, New York. And it was intensified as we began to learn about those we knew who had been touched directly or indirectly by the events: a colleague of my wife's whose brother was killed; a woman in our building whose husband, brother and brother-in-law were killed; congregants in our synagogue whose relatives and friends were killed; the men of the firehouse just a block from our apartment, where 11 firefighters were killed. And it is renewed with each closing of Fifth Avenue for another funeral at St. Patrick's.

I note that the law school community has already begun to address many of the legal issues that are raised by the events of September 11th and those that have occurred since then. That discourse will, I hope, deal not only with the lofty issues, but the more mundane as well.

For example, I am sure we will continue to explore the Constitutional questions that must be considered in any "homeland" defense. I hope, however, that we also will discuss the more "homely" issues, such as the way we behave professionally on a day-to-day basis. (One lawyer I know said that this was a good time to negotiate contracts with him because he would be far less to argue over every comma and period in a proposed agreement. Unfortunately, he didn't tell me when he was going to revert to his old ways.)

Finally, I am concerned that there may be some among us who think that much of what we talk about in class is now be largely irrelevant to the "real world." A seemingly esoteric point of law can't carry much weight when measured on the scales of 5,000 or 6,000 deaths just in those WTC buildings downtown, to say nothing of all the others who died on the planes and in Washington, DC, the

escalating terrorist threats and the fighting in Afghanistan (and soon-to-be who knows where else). I think that view is mistaken.

It is mistaken because carrying on with our lives is never irrelevant. The world is simply the sum of the individual living we do. It is mistaken, too, because the legal profession has always played a central role in the life of the country. The rule of law, in its broadest sense encompassing not only the grand Constitutional traditions, but the commercial rules, the day-to-day expectations that govern the interactions between people and businesses, makes a difference. Of course, we are human and, thus, do not always perfectly live up to the loftier aspirations of the profession, but that doesn't mean attempting to do so isn't worthwhile. Being a good lawyer is knowing the broad principles and the esoteric points.

I believe that New York Law School wants to turn out thoughtful, competent, technically equipped lawyers, for whom ideas are important. These are qualities no less relevant today than they were before September 11th. And we must accumulate those qualities post September 11th, just as we did previously.

## Helaine Balsam

Adjunct Professor

Dear Philip,

I hope this email finds you and your family well in Las Vegas. It was good to hear from you and to be thought about in this time of crisis.

It's hard to believe you remembered that my mother worked across the street from the twin towers all those years ago. Yes—she was already retired. The law firm she worked for moved to Williams Street a couple of years ago anyway. My oldest friend is now the senior partner. She got caught in a dust cloud when the second tower collapsed, but everyone else at the firm was otherwise okay.

We are all fine, but very shaken. I have been within several blocks of ground zero a few times. (I'm actually teaching at NY Law School which is just a few blocks north). What they say on TV is true—you can't really comprehend the devastation unless you view it first hand. Particularly upsetting is seeing the

remains of the towers all lit up at night. It's like a macabre NY version of "Guernica," only worse because it's home. My family and I had been to the Trade Center the Friday before 9/11 to attend a ballet on the Plaza. Who knew it would be the last time we'd ever see it? These before and after images keep running through my mind, over and over and over...

However, we keep moving forward one step at a time. I try to take comfort in the fact that the National Guard is patrolling BROADWAY!!! I feel safer because they're there, but I just can't help mourning for the times when their presence was unnecessary. Not that I'm not grateful. It could have been so much worse. They say life is getting back to normal here and in some ways I guess it is, but "normal" has a new meaning—like smelling death on the wind when it blows in my direction.

Again, thank you for thinking of us. Say some prayers if you are so inclined. It can't hurt. — Helaine

## Arminda Bepko

Class of 2004, day division

In the two-week absence from New York Law School I was grateful to return to my job at ABC News to help with the coverage. It didn't serve to take my mind off the tragedy but gave me some direction of thought and a purpose in helping to contribute in a positive way. In the years I was a producer for the news magazines, like all my colleagues, I often put my personal life on hold during breaking news events affecting people outside my immediate world. This time the event was in our own backyard and touched all our lives in such a profound way; the dedication and perseverance I witnessed during that time was awesome in the face of such tragedy. Despite many losing loved ones and some losing their homes, the journalists continued around the clock to cover immediate stories and chase investigative leads in order to bring news to a public desperate for information. The job didn't end that day, nor was it finished by the time I was able to return to my studies. The journalists continue still to report the stories.

## Richard B. Bernstein

Adjunct Professor

Report from a Wounded City

*I was at home (in Brooklyn Heights) on the morning of 11 September 2001; I was recovering from a mild case of food poisoning, and I'd just decided not to go into work till that afternoon. Then I heard the first radio report of the first plane's crash into the WTC. I was on the phone with a friend when I heard the explosion of the second crash through my kitchen window. For the rest of the morning, I clung to my radio and fielded a mess of phone calls from friends and relatives and colleagues. Then I got ready to deal with the outside world. Brooklyn Heights all that afternoon and evening and the next day was pervaded with the dust, smoke, and ash of the disaster—we could smell the smell of burning everywhere. On and off for the next few weeks, we smelled that smell; it refused to go away. Also, at the end of that day, I went down to the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, which usually offers a magnificent view of the skyline of lower Manhattan. On that day (which was otherwise a picture-perfect late-summer day), only the tip of lower Manhattan and the stretch of Manhattan north of the Brooklyn Bridge were clear and distinct. A terrible gray-brown shroud of smoke and dust and ash hung over the island between its southern tip and the Brooklyn Bridge; the buildings were visible only in silhouette, and . . . what was most painful of all . . . the two largest and most familiar silhouettes were no longer there.*

You can't kill New York City. That's one of the comforting things that I've learned yet again in the past week. Real New Yorkers are thoughtful, helpful, kind to one another and to perfect strangers (and even to tourists, no matter how much some of us may grumble about them).

But, at the same time, we're all still in pain here, and there's a reason for it that people haven't really found the words to express.

New York City has become a haunted city—a ghost town.

The obvious ghosts are the two towers of the World Trade Center. This morning, I rode the Q local as it lurched and heaved its way over the Manhattan Bridge. It gives you a brief but amazing view of lower Manhattan, and up to 11

September people would lift their heads, smile, and savor the spectacle of the skyline providing a backdrop for the noblest and most beautiful bridge in the whole world, the Brooklyn Bridge.

Now, however, people don't look up, or they avert their eyes. They can't bear to see the vacancy against the sky. They can't bear to be reminded that two old friends who never should have been taken away are gone.

People hated the twin towers when they were constructed in the late 1960s, but over the years since they opened in 1973 they became familiar landmarks, and many people grew to love them. They smiled on seeing them against the sky, whether from Brooklyn or in lower Manhattan. They dined at Windows on the World and oohed and aahed at the view.

The towers swiftly became an icon of this city and of the vibrant life that they contained and sheltered. But they are gone now, and the wound is deep and painful. And their ghosts hover over this city.

There are other ghosts, too. There are subway lines that are cut off from stations that used to be milestones in people's lives. Those stations are, at best, shuttered and locked; at worst, they are damaged or wrecked. Some subway lines go through some of these stations slowly, carefully, and people look out the windows at the deserted platforms and the gated turnstiles—and then look away, swallowing and dabbing their eyes. If you look at a subway map, you see a circulatory map of New York City as a living organism. On Monday, the Transit Authority published a new map showing the new routes for the duration. Some subway stations just are not shown any more. We don't know when, or whether, those old routes will be restored.

It's not just the buildings and the subways. It's what the buildings' destruction means to us as well. There was an entire, flourishing neighborhood that the World Trade Center anchored, and that, revitalized over the past twenty-eight years, grew up around it. The core of that neighborhood was itself a small city-within-a-city, with restaurants, banks, clothing stores, and one of the best book-stores in Manhattan (Borders, if you're interested). [I teach down there, and several of the heartbreaking photos showing people running in terror from the collapsing towers were taken on streets that I've walked hundreds of times.] That neighborhood is bereft, and its core is gone.

Everything seems less permanent, more fragile, more allowed to exist on sufferance. I walked through a large complex of buildings at NYU on my way here, and I know that those buildings seem as if they'll be there forever, but I also know now that they could be wrecked in an hour. It took 105 minutes from the first impact of the first plane to the last collapse of the second WTC tower. That's less than two hours—less time than a forgettable disaster movie.

But the truly haunting ghosts are not the buildings of the WTC complex, nor the cut-off arteries and veins of the city's subway system, nor the life of the TriBeCa neighborhood, nor the businesses that flourished and served thousands of people there. The truly haunting ghosts are on every lamppost, on walls in every subway station, on every bus-stop shelter, in the city.

They are posters—laser-printed 8.5" x 11" pages bearing photographs of smiling men and women, most of them in their teens, 20s, or 30s. Each bears a name, a phone number, an agonizingly careful physical description.

They are the ghosts of the people who, taken together, were the soul of the World Trade Center and the surrounding neighborhood. They were the people who ran Windows on the World, the people who ran the elevators, the people who made the bond trades, the people who sold books and tapes and posters, the people who made felaful and hot dogs, the people who were security guards and messengers and secretaries and mail-room workers. And a heartbreakingly large number of them are firefighters, people whose bravery and devotion to this city cannot be expressed in words.

They did what Lincoln talked about—they gave “the last full measure of devotion,” knowing the risks and taking them anyway.

The ghosts look out, from every street corner, smiling, some of them in formal clothing from wedding photos, some of them relaxed, with children in their arms or on their knees, some of them serious, in photos taken for driver's licenses or passports or college or high-school yearbooks. They are from all walks of life, all races, all colors, all creeds, all levels of education, all levels of employment.

They are the face not just of the World Trade Center, but of New York City. They have husbands and wives and partners and parents and children and brothers and sisters and friends who are trying to keep hope alive, even as hope dwindles day by day.

The people who put up those posters want their loved ones back. But some of them know that they won't get them back alive. Failing that miracle, they want certainty as to their loved ones' fates. They want closure. They want to be able to bury their dead, to mourn for them, and to honor them.

The unspoken fear is that many of these people will never know what happened to their loved ones. They will suffer the pain of not knowing for the rest of their lives. They will have a sense that their loved ones are gone, but that is all.

New York City is a ghost town, and it will be for a long time to come.

*Addendum, 9 October 2001:*

Since I wrote that essay, New York has fought to restore at least some semblance of normal life. The MTA has done wonders in restoring subway stations to service; at present, only seven stations are out of commission, five of them only because they have been cut off from the rest of the subway system by the near-total wrecking of the other two, which are right under the WTC. Much of lower Manhattan—save for an area bordered on the north by Chambers Street and on the east by Broadway—is open once more to mass transit and pedestrian traffic and even some vehicle traffic.

And yet, there are still sad reminders. The posters for those who remain missing and presumed dead still wave from every lamppost, phone booth, and bus-stop shelter, as well as displays in Penn Station, the Times Square station, Grand Central Terminal, and in front of area hospitals such as St. Vincent's in Greenwich Village. People stand before these posters, silent, reading, sometimes crying; they're standing there as if they're attending a wake or sitting shiva, paying their respects to fellow New Yorkers whom they'll never see again.

An out-of-town friend reports to me that every single New Yorker with whom he speaks sounds deeply depressed. And, now and then, people you barely know will strike up a conversation with you, and suddenly begin to recount their experiences of 11 September. You just stand there and listen—knowing that if the roles were reversed, they'd do the same for you.

This city is hard to kill, but it is wounded, and the affliction has touched the life of everyone who lives here, and also the lives of those who don't live here any more but still count themselves New Yorkers.

We'll make it. On Yom Kippur night, I attended services with a close friend who used to work at Cantor & Fitzgerald and who lost lots of old friends and former coworkers on 11 September. At one point, I told her, "Everything's going to be OK again—I don't know how we'll get there, but everything's going to be OK again."

## Michael Botein

Professor and Director of the Media Center

### *42 Flags at half-mast*

On September 11, I was representing NYLS at a two-day Board meeting of the Council of Europe's Broadcasting Observatory in Strasbourg, France—since NYLS is the only US member, for reasons too bizarre to relate.

After we finished up the second day's meeting at about 3:30 PM CEST (9:30 AM EST), I and a German friend strolled outside to take in the end of a beautiful day. As we stood there, we noticed that workmen were lowering the 42 flags—one for each member state—in front of the European Parliament. When we asked the reason, they said "because of the World Trade Center bombing, of course."

Neither I nor my friend had any idea what they were talking about, and hightailed it back to the Parliament to call the States. As we expected, all lines to any place on the East Coast were blocked. I finally had the sense to call my daughter in San Francisco, who brought me up to date and undertook to contact the rest of the family.

Ironically, the terrorists had planned to hijack a Boeing 747 from Frankfurt Airport—five minutes flying time north—and dive it into the Parliament. But I didn't find out about that until later.

Perhaps the strangest aspect of the whole affair was watching the television news back in my hotel room an hour later, on CNN and BBC World News. It was identical with that in the U.S., since it had been shot by ABC News. It just made everything more disquieting, since I was so out of touch with family and friends here.



## James Brown

Class of 2004, evening division

I have been with the New York Fire Department for six years. Although there is always some level of uncertainty and insecurity regarding what might occur every time I go to work, the risks the job entails were on a scale that I could accept. The losses we sustained on September 11 changed all that.

In a single day, the Department lost half as many members as had been lost in its entire history.

I have car-pooled, played softball, attended weddings and funerals, shared meals and fought fires with many members of the Department. My firehouse, Engine 74, lost one member. Our sister firehouse Ladder 25, and others in the area, lost the entire crew that was working that day. Every time I looked at the pictures of members missing, I recognized someone else I had crossed paths with at one time or another. I could not reconcile this reality with any kind of logic or emotion.

Nothing can explain or justify such a senseless loss.

The support of the community has been tremendous. Everyone in the city wanted to help in some way—everyone wanted to honor the civil servants who protect and defend. People on the street applaud and cheer us responding to an alarm. It has all been very moving.

At the same time, however, I think it is important to keep in mind that the real heroes of the Fire Department are the same people who are unable to appreciate these accolades—all the firefighters who never returned from their last run.

While it is important to look ahead, rebuild, and reaffirm life, it is essential to “Never Forget,” as the saying goes. Occasionally, people walking by my firehouse ask if we lost anybody on September 11. When I tell them we did, they sometimes ask, “What was his name?” To me, that is the right way to honor the Fire Department. All the lives lost had their own individual hopes and dreams, just like everyone else.

## Hilary Cathcart

Class of 2005, evening division

As I left school on the night of September 10, 2001, I was exhausted. I had spent the previous weekend reading and preparing for the week ahead. As I walked on Worth Street I said to myself “I don’t think I can do this, it’s too much work, it’s too hard.” Turning right on Church Street, the breathtaking site of the towers rose before me. The night was clear and cool and the towers were illuminated. Then and there I decided that they would be my beacons. I thought, whenever I feel overwhelmed or feel like I made a mistake going to law school, I can look forward to seeing the towers as I leave each evening. I will think of them as a guiding light; an inspiration that will pull me through the difficult times.

The irony of those thoughts has not escaped me.

Like all who were in New York on the morning of September 11, there are some things that will be with me always. The throngs of people walking, as if in a trance, uptown and across bridges; the eerie silence save for the shuffling feet and fighter planes; and most extraordinary, the cavernous space behind St. Paul’s Chapel as seen from City Hall Park.

We are all touched or changed by this in one way or another. I am more determined to finish law school. Maybe a fuller understanding will come with wisdom. I can only hope so.

There is one thing that keeps playing over and over again in my mind. When President Kennedy was assassinated, someone said to then Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel Patrick Moynihan “we’ll never laugh again.” Moynihan replied, “Oh, we’ll laugh again, but we’ll never be young again.”

## Maxine N. Cenac

Class of 2003, day division

Every Living Breath Is an Opportunity (to effect change). *In honor of those who ran TOWARD challenge*

The day was a life-altering one. A classmate and I watched as hundreds of people, some covered in soot, ran past our school. What did we do? We adhered to a well-known New York City code: “Run now, ask questions later.” The only problem was, no one knew where to run. In our minds, anything was a possible target. Within seconds, ordinary citizens became military strategists, plotting best possible means of escape: “We can’t go toward midtown. It’s heavily populated. That’ll probably be the next place they hit.” Many cried out, fearing that this was it—how we’d all die.

At some point, we had to stop running. Shock, and then reflection set in. When we returned to school two weeks later, professors asked: “Has this changed your mind about becoming lawyers? Knowing that everything could be gone tomorrow, do you still feel as if there’s a point to it all?” The answer to the latter is unequivocally, yes. Why? I remember that while thousands of us were running away from the falling debris, fire, and threat of further attack, a few were running toward it. Some were going to save lives, some to save those saving lives, and others to record lasting impressions of those moments. Those few knew what their life purpose was (if only in that moment). Knowing, as is a reality that comes with their calling, that tomorrow isn’t promised. But for them, what did that matter? They chose to live their calling...today. Risking their own lives, they rushed in to save ours so that we could have another chance at existence.

What is to be gleaned from all of this? If you survived that day, you have been given a second chance. Search your heart and soul for your calling—what it is that will bring peace into your life and a knowing that you have come to this earth for a real and meaningful purpose. Let us ask ourselves daily: If today were my last, am I content and fulfilled? Then, eliminate anything that hinders you from realizing your purpose.

Finally, let us remember that before this attack, there were numerous other threats to democracy—poverty, racism, sexism, and inequity in education. They still exist. There is much to be done. Today, I am a lawyer-in-the-making, with a renewed passion to carry on the work of Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall, Marian Wright Edelman, and others. I'm not concerned with whether tomorrow will come.

Please do not desecrate the memories of those who fought to save our lives that day and those who may lose their lives in the days ahead, by going back to business as usual. There is no going back. Before I breathe my last breath, may I go, knowing that I valued the life given to me, gave as much as I took, and ran toward, instead of away from any challenge worth fighting for.

## Kevin Cunnane

Class of 2004, evening division

### My Brothers

The events of 9/11/01 will remain etched in my memory forever. The day began with a band of cowards attacking a civilian target. I rushed downtown like thousands of my Brothers. Somehow, I was spared the fate of 343 of my comrades. For my Brothers that perished that day, the reward is that they died doing what they loved. My Brothers live to help their fellow man. My Brothers ran in harms way not for praise, but because it was the right thing to do. Being a firefighter is not something one does for a living—it is what one is. The real heroes are the wives and children that lost a loved one so valuable, and so irreplaceable, they willingly lent their patriotic warrior to the rest of us.

My Brothers value human life so much. What a vast contrast they are to the cowards that caused this disaster. My Brothers are the exact opposite of terrorists. My Brothers don't ask what race or religion someone is before rushing into harm's way. The terrorists do ask those questions, and they try to force their will upon others. What a mistake they have made because My Brothers are now the angels that will guard those seeking retribution.

The FDNY lost hundreds, but thousands still remain. We lost men of every rank from probie firefighters to the Catholic Chaplain and the Chief of Department. The lessons they taught us will remain with us forever. My Brothers carried out the most successful rescue in history on 9/11. 25,000 people were led to safety. WE grieve for the victims we could not save.

To my Brothers I say thank you for the lessons you taught me, the drinks that you bought me, and the tears that you brought me. The events of 9/11 have only made our brotherhood stronger. We are still ready to act as our city's first line of defense. To the Cowards we say you can crush our buildings but you can't crush our pride.

Thank you to all of NY Law School for your thoughts, prayers and concern.  
God Bless my fallen Brothers

## Amy Fechter

Class of 2004, day division

### *My America*

America, Oh Beautiful . . . our passion indestructible . . .

I pledge allegiance to the flag . . .

it was political, fanatical, radical, terrorism at its

pinnacle, bringing a nation irresistible

to her knees

please . . .

see us raise ourselves far about the heights we've

innocently dreamed, and in the meantime hear us sing

FREEDOM . . . IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM . . . CRY OUT FREEDOM

AND BELIEVE

we will not cringe or back away or fall prey to the

criminal way, this is our 'Redemption Song'—know

that

our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers were

murdered not in vain—they carry the song of liberty,  
justice, the American Way—heroes we've known, now  
mourn, now make room for new lifelines to bloom—  
hands joined together, world-wide human endeavor—see  
life now not as children (that childhood died) but  
with a new vigor to live life

LOUD

can't help but question why, can't grapple or  
understand how—instead watch the world mourn but  
continue to carry on

some stoic, indestructible, others shocked, torn  
my father cried, as did I . . .

we cannot hide in Fear, we cannot wonder when it will  
again appear—

AMERICA, OH BEAUTIFUL, our freedom is real, and our  
will to persevere will overpower evil—we will watch it  
disappear the nightmares we hear—we will conquer

the silence . . .

still lingers sometimes . . .

and the sounds of sirens has brought the cold . . .

Still we have grown

and the 'Come Together' of our nation makes the music  
bold

there is no divide, we all breathe, blood rushing,  
heart pulsing, we are

ALIVE

and

'FREEDOM,

I WON'T LET YOU DOWN,

I WILL NOT GIVE YOU UP'

## Cynthia D. Fisher

Class of 1984, day division

### *Ground Zero*

There is empathy  
And then there is this . . .  
A new reality . . .  
The acrid smell of ashes  
laden with concrete  
and the flesh and spirit of our brothers and sisters;  
husbands and wives; sons and daughters; friends and lovers. . . .  
The shower of papers, pictures, photographs . . .  
The computers stopped;  
The elevators halted;  
The phones disconnected;  
Bridges, tunnels, highways,  
the sky . . .  
Avenues of freedom for so long,  
now avenues of rescue and escape . . .  
closed . . .

This is America . . . icons of freedom and democracy,  
New York and Washington . . .  
This cannot happen here . . . .  
The beautiful blue sky of light and freedom,  
of spirit and kindness  
is now a black and cloudy sky  
raining tears of terror and fear . . . .  
Yes, Here.  
Our home, our country . . . .

## Rob Georges

Class of 2004, day division

Well here goes—to think my friends and I used to say we’ve never seen anything important in our lives before. This hits on so many levels.

It used to be unique to meet someone who had a real “life and death” story, sadly not anymore. I guess the word is mostly sad (there is some joy but it’s tough to get to). Sad mostly that humans have everything going for them, it is all right here for us to live the most exciting productive lives and we refuse to. Sad that it takes something like this to have everyone realize that charity matters and that we have to look out for others and that we need something like this to make people realize what’s important. Then people freak out and say wow being a fireman is so much more noble than being on Wall street. This is when I feel really sad that people still haven’t realized that nobility and honor is not in what you do, it is in how you do it.

It was so incomprehensible that I feel like almost every negative adjective has a new meaning. My range of emotions and feelings has been expanded exponentially. Horrible, terrible, crazy, awful, sad. . . It’s not that these words describe what happened, it’s that what happened is now the ultimate definition of these words. Sure, the Holocaust and World Wars and other events were worse, but for me, it’s 9-11-01 that comes to mind when I hear words like those.

My friends, wow to say that it feels like some of us are directly who this was aimed at wouldn’t even scratch the surface. I’ve met kids at SU and from LI that were living such comfortably removed lives that they’d say they didn’t follow real world current events or learn history like one says they don’t ski or play tennis. As if knowing the world we live in is a hobby that one should choose. On the other hand, couldn’t one define ultimate achievement and progress in society as when people are able to live life without knowing how clean and accessible their water is and how safe from harm both war related and health related they are. I am not sure.

The United States is hoping to do something that has never been done before. We want to remain a global superpower forever. however, to think we will



be the only one forever is foolish. If we want to remain even a secure and stable dynasty we need to redefine what it means to be in that role. As long as there are countries as non-developed (it's not poverty) as some third world countries are, the resentment that is out there in the world will be there. We need to work with these countries and show that we are concerned about them. The have-nots use religion and foreign policy as a crutch for the fact that what they're really upset about is there average life span is like 40. I'd be mad too. The have-nots are mad at the haves.

When I say we, I really mean we as the world not just the US. One of the US's greatest failures has not been our policies, or our culture, it has been our failure to establish some legitimate global governing authority that the US is a part of (and obviously very influential in) but one that is not a puppet to the US. This group would act in a way that promotes the good of the world. Can't we establish an effective organization that can work to improve and keep safe the world?

After thinking about this for over a month, I am not surprised that someone was able to fly a commercial airline into a high rise building, but who would think anyone would try? I have way more trouble understanding how something was able to be flown into a building that serves as the center of our defense. I would expect that to be guarded in a way that high rise office buildings aren't.

Maybe we've (kids my age) have just been too privileged. Maybe humans really are that stupid that we can't live near each other without trying to kill each other. Maybe the US has created this utopia and we should have just enjoyed what we had, because now it's time to join the rest of the world and understand what life is really like.

Before we figure out how to bring someone to justice for this crime under International Law, maybe we should figure out what "justice" and "crime" mean in this sense first and then create the laws later. It's like we've been trying to create the road and we're not sure where we are going. If this was terrorism, can't one argue that the US has (a) supported these type of violent acts before with Israel, not on this size but certainly the type of action, because there we felt it was "alright" and (b) can't some of our policies towards other countries, that result in the death of citizens there, based on our dislike solely for their government be considered, *i.e.*, Cuba and Iraq? It's not like these countries were

doing so great before our sanctions, but still we're killing them. Can't you equate the death of all those Iraqi citizens due to UN sanctions with this?

I am not saying it's our responsibility to cure the world, but as the biggest guy on the block we've got to be responsible more than others. And again our failure to create a legitimate International Body only hurts ourselves.

This is hard because when I'm or you're not grieving for close friends and thinking about it on an individual level, the global situation is a lot to think about. Then you go out to do something and the people next to you on the subway are talking about this right before they switch the conversation to that night's dinner. Or you go to class and other students have the Twin Towers on their screensavers. I know people grieve in different ways, but I wish people would be a bit more sensitive to others. I guess in some ways we all just can't get this off our minds.

For many of my friends this was the first funeral we went to. It was sad, but I also never understood that death really is the ultimate motivation. I mean, to live to honor the people we know who have died by living how they'd have wanted us to. And because it is now very clear we might die a lot sooner than we think (reference *Shawshank Redemption* "Get busy living or get busy dying.")

I can only think this is just the first of these attacks and what other forms they can come in. I overheard a train conductor a few days ago say some conductor uniforms were stolen and I was immediately thinking how one would go about hijacking a train?

## Lena Holubnyczyj

Class of 2005, evening division

### *My City-Our City*

A million dollar view, from Flushing Queens no less. The eighth floor patient lounge at the New York Hospital of Queens, was my favorite spot to see the most spectacular sunsets. The sunsets viewed from those large windows rivaled any sunset on any exotic beach or mountaintop. For when the fading light glinted off

of those towers in lower Manhattan at twilight, I was sure happy I wasn't, by an accident of birth, looking at a twilight sunset in Duluth. It made me fiercely proud to be a native.

The feelings that I harbor for this city are intensely personal. Whether I love it for making the fulfillment of any whim so outrageously easy, or I hate it for attracting the tourist hordes that always seem to be following me around at the worst possible times. Either I'm cursing at the sky, or I'm enjoying the view. Bottom line, without it, I'd be only a quarter of the person I am at this very moment.

It was on that eighth floor lounge where I saw the second tower fall, my skyline irrevocably altered. In the several blurry days that followed, my shock turned to grief which turned to anger. Then my feeling thankfully morphed again. What was left was a tremendous pride, an expansive pride, that extended beyond me. For what I witnessed was a shared pride and a shared commitment to everything this city was—and is, by those very people I foolishly thought couldn't love this city as much as I.

My city—our city.

For as unsophisticated as this sounds, one cannot be exclusive of the other. Only a true New Yorker realizes that.

Andreana G. Joannidis

Class of 2003, day division

October 22, 2001

Dear Dean Matasar,

I hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones healthy and in good spirits. I have been meaning to write to you since school reopened, but it has been such a difficult period.

I was on campus on that horrible day of September 11. In fact, I had arrived at school only minutes after the first attack. I ended up staying on campus, stranded, for several hours. Confusion, anxiety, anger and terror, to name just a

few of the emotions that I was experiencing, marked those few hours. However, through it all, I looked to you and the staff as beacons of strength and normalcy. You and your staff provided information, comfort, and a sense of safety while just outside our door the world was coming to an end.

After school reopened, I was again impressed at the school's response. It was wonderful to see the administration and staff take such strong interest in the students' physical and mental well being. Having counselors available upon our return was and continues to be a great help.

Equally as wonderful have been the teach-ins, workshops, and all the opportunities to discuss these horrific events, and hear other people's perspectives. My mother came with me to the Friday teach-in just before school started, and both my parents accompanied me to an October 3rd symposium at the school. They too have been impressed and thankful at the opportunities provided.

I wanted to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely,

Andreana G. Joannidis

Peter A. Joannidis

Father of NYLS Student Andreana G. Joannidis

With awe we stand Twin horror we see

Look askance, eyes glazed

Heart-felt sadness, near tears

Lines ring with alarm

Lives forsaken, lives discarded

Sirens blare fear, light flash dread

Twice hope collapses, what have we done?

## Kenneth C. Kettering

Associate Professor

### *My Day At the War*

New York Law School is located eight blocks from the World Trade Center, deep within the vast area of lower Manhattan that had been evacuated on the day of the attack. Today, six days after the attack, a portion of the evacuated area, including the block on which NYLS is located, was reopened to pedestrians on a limited and strictly controlled basis. In anticipation, emails had gone forth over the weekend summoning the faculty to a meeting this morning. So I went.

Blue jeans, hiking boots, a rough shirt (but with a collar—status distinctions are the last things to go). We were warned to bring food, so I put a sandwich and M&Ms in a small satchel together with a book, my passport (said to be useful at the police checkpoints) and bottled water.

Driving of course was out of the question, as all of lower Manhattan remains closed to civilian vehicles. But, like the day of the attack, the day dawned beautifully clear. So it was a pleasant walk to the train station, and a pleasant wait for a train into Penn Station. The off-peak train I took was almost on time, and it was not crowded. On the surface the other commuters were as blasé as New York commuters customarily are—no camaraderie or other unusual behavior—but one could sense a difference. No snoozing, small talk distinctly muted, everyone awake and alert. Half listening for something?

When the train reached the swamps of New Jersey and the city came into view, everyone stared out the windows at the hole in the skyline where the WTC had been, but nobody remarked on it. The site continues to emit plumes that are visible from miles away. Cement dust, I thought at the time, though I later learned that unextinguished fires continued to smolder under the rubble.

From the train through the corridors of Penn Station, under some large new American flags, to the subway. Specifically, the 1 line south to Canal Street station. That is the last functioning station on that line in Manhattan. Stations further south are closed indefinitely. One station on that line was underneath the WTC itself. Passengers on the subway were even more blasé than the passengers

on the train; one would never know that anything was out of the ordinary. To be expected, I suppose, the mores of NYC subway society being what they are.

Emerging out of the subway station onto the brightly sunlit street I entered a world in which the familiar and the strange were surrealistically fused.

The first thing I noticed was the smell, a distinctly noticeable though not markedly unpleasant odor difficult to classify. Cement dust, I thought. I ceased to notice it after a few minutes. Nobody remarked on it, though those of my colleagues who were not city residents were also entering the city for the first time since the attack and must have noticed it.

Reaching the top of the steps of the subway station and emerging on the sidewalk, the day was preternaturally clear and bright after the subterranean corridors. As far as the eye could see in either direction were blue wooden barricades, heavily manned by police. No military presence at this set of barricades. All of western Manhattan south of Canal Street is restricted and cordoned off. Civilians are not allowed into that area unless they can prove their identity and their need to enter the area. The police were in ordinary patrol uniforms, not riot gear, and were not unusually armed or particularly tense, but they clearly meant business. Nobody was even coming close to the barricaded area except at the checkpoints, and there were no hangers-around. A few hours before many people, including some of my colleagues, had been turned back at these checkpoints, but now a fair number of people were getting through, as were many vehicles (utility vans, construction equipment, police and fire vehicles, vehicles from various emergency organizations, a humvee stenciled "military police"). Police were not satisfied with my passport and photo ID from my school, but addition of my New Jersey driver's license, together with a detailed explanation of where I was going and why, did the trick. The police did not search me or the small satchel I was carrying, though they did search the fellow in front of me, a bicyclist who looked like a messenger and who was also carrying a satchel. The power of the collar?

From the Canal Street checkpoint it is a straight walk of a fifteen or so blocks down Varick Street to West Broadway to the WTC. My school is about eight blocks north of the WTC and I had estimated correctly that it would take about 15-20 minutes to reach it. No place in the restricted area at that time seemed to be open

for business—not surprising without deliveries—but many people were sipping from coffee cups as they headed down to ground zero. Starbucks is clearly the beverage of choice for this war.

Both sides of Varick and W. Broadway were parked solid with emergency and construction vehicles, a few military humvees, ordinary vehicles with official-looking acronymic window decals, various unclassifiable vehicles. The oddest were two converted school busses marked “N.Y. Corrections Dept.” Every prison guard in the state who could be spared must have been given a bus ride to Manhattan to beef up the police presence. Sanitation vehicles trundled along periodically, washing streets in the accustomed way, oblivious to the strange goings-on.

The other pedestrians were also familiar and strange. Construction workers in overalls, many with American flags flying from their hardhats; police, fire and medical personnel; civilians who seemed to be residents of the area (including a few children, none of whom looked scared. Why?); a hazardous-materials rescue team dressed in white nylon spacesuits with bright yellow boots, carrying their helmets; some military personnel in camouflage uniforms, none armed; hordes of Consolidated Edison repair workers, all dressed in identical deep blue jumpsuits and yellow hardhats (all strangely new looking. Stockpiled for catastrophes?); nonresident civilians on errands similar to mine. Almost everyone was headed south, toward ground zero. The variety of people and costumes, the unusual and variegated vehicles that drove by, and the uniform movement south, was weirdly suggestive of a parade, adding to the air of unreality.

When I reached my school, rather than go in I decided to press on southward as far as I could toward ground zero. Three or so blocks further south, on the far side of Chambers Street, the visible destruction began. The WTC is about three or four block south of Chambers Street. From the vantage points I reached the site of the WTC was hidden just behind the last visible building. The smoke (or cement dust?) was a substantial pall over the site, but did not seem to spread horizontally. The skyscrapers across the street from the WTC were missing windows, though not many, and showed no signs of structural damage to my untrained eye. They were filthy from the smoke.

The whole vast area south of Chambers Street was cordoned off by an inner perimeter. Unlike the outer perimeter at Canal Street this was not a mere line of

barricades, but a gigantic solid hurricane fence—and not just at intersections; the fence seemed to run without interruption around the whole vast area. No possibility of easily sneaking under or over that. (Where did they get those miles and miles of fence on short notice?) Security here was very tight. The perimeter was heavily patrolled by police in ordinary uniforms and Army troops in camouflage uniforms. Curiously none of the military had any visible weapons—their belts and packs were laden with masks, goggles, water bottles and other unlethal items—while the police were all armed, though not unusually so by US standards. There was a long line of civilians trying to get through the checkpoint at W. Broadway and Chambers Street, but none was allowed through while I was there.

I walked a few blocks along the perimeter, passing small groups of other civilians, all staring silently at the smoke plume. At each intersection there were large unattended dumps of bottled water, snacks and other provisions, presumably for rescue workers and the perimeter guards. A closed restaurant had a cardboard sign in its window imploring President Bush to declare war on Afghanistan.

In my younger and more foolhardy days I might have looked for a way to sneak through the cordon to stare directly at the world's biggest pile of rubble and 5000 corpses, but age has taught me, if not wisdom, at least prudence and a little decency. So instead I walked up Church Street and back to my school. By this time some of the tiny retail stores that line both sides of Church Street were showing signs of life. Mostly they were not open for business, with the owner and perhaps a single employee engaged in bringing mysterious boxes in, taking mysterious boxes out, sweeping the floor, or throwing away last week's trash, but a few particularly enterprising establishments had opened and were selling what had not spoiled—soda, chips and the like.

When I reached my school, I joined the staff meeting that was then in progress, which soon segued into a meeting of the faculty. After an hour the meeting was interrupted by a fire alarm which caused us to evacuate the building. A fire alarm? Yes, a genuine fire alarm, and our own smoke, not the WTC. As we faculty milled about outside our building and watched the fire trucks roll up (very quickly too, despite the heavy casualties among city firefighters six days previously), we eventually learned that the local electrical mains were sending into our buildings far more electricity than they customarily received, a result of the vastly



diminished load in the restricted area. That overload caused one of the electrical switchboards in our basement to start to fume. The extent of the damage was not then known, though I later heard that it was minimal.

After an hour or so of milling about on the street we were allowed back into our library, but not the other buildings, in which there was still some residual smoke. Inexplicably, nobody had cut power to the building before, during or after the fire. Nevertheless we faculty members prudently avoided the elevators—we aren't intellectuals for nothing—and trooped up four flights of stairs to reconvene our meeting in the top floor of the library.

After another hour or so of intense discussion, an ashen-faced assistant dean hurried into the meeting and advised us that we must again evacuate the building, and quickly. While trooping out and crossing the street, I asked the nearest assistant dean (a different one) if he knew the reason for this latest evacuation. It was a bomb threat. Someone had made a call to Consolidated Edison threatening the Con Ed workers in our building's basement. False bomb threats are all the rage in New York City right now, it seems.

A fire and a bomb threat, all within the first couple of hours. Huddled with my colleagues on the street corner again, I wondered out loud what would happen next. One of them turned, shook her finger at me and said solemnly, "Don't go there, Ken." No bad thoughts. Do not think bad thoughts. I did not tell her that all I could think of as a topper was a terrorist attack, and we'd already had that.

After half an hour's wait on the sidewalk across the street from the school (we all took it for granted that the threat was bogus, but the forms must be obeyed), the dean wisely decided that this wasn't our day. He gave us a date and time to reconvene, and we dispersed. Those of us who chose to hang around were eventually allowed to enter the buildings briefly to take things from our offices. I climbed another four flights of stairs before realizing that I'd left my office key at home. I could have walked down, tried to hunt up a security guard with a master key, and walked back up, but at that point I decided that this, too, was not meant to be. Inshallah. What is written is written.

Out of the building, back to the streets, and a final look down West Broadway at the plume of smoke and dust marking the grave of 5000 fellow citizens. Among them are at least three parents of classmates of my older son, who is not far from

draft age. The day remained preternaturally clear and bright. You could see a long way—but not as far as they had gone. *Monday, September 17, 2001*

## Jethro K. Lieberman

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor

*Excerpts from a letter to friends in January*

Some time off around the new year prompts me to record events of the past few months, from the vantage of my office, eight blocks from where the World Trade Center buildings stood. As I come to work each morning, the sight that once greeted me on emerging from the subway at Franklin and West Broadway—the two immense towers—is now a blue haze in the sky. We were closed for five days and forced to suspend classes for nine, until we regained our electrical power, phones, and physical access. It took much longer to regain our Internet service (into October—a serious issue for a school) and our long-distance phone service (which didn't become fully available until around Thanksgiving). We're still working on regaining our equilibrium.

Here's how it went for me that morning. I was ambling along, "late" as usual. I was in my car about 9 and, as is my habit, turned on WINS to get the traffic news. (A good day on the New York highways is when they tell you that someone else's roadway has just suffered a traffic jam, not yours.) The announcer told of a mysterious accident that had just befallen one of the WTC buildings. I wasn't really concentrating, and it didn't seem relevant, the buildings not being on my route. A couple of minutes later a more agitated voice said that an airplane had crashed into the building. That was odd—very odd—but still, nothing that seemed portentous. A few more minutes south along my way to the Bronx, where I pick up the No. 1 train, we listeners were treated to a breathless account of a second airplane hitting the second tower. Still I drove on, reaching my parking spot at 242nd Street about 9:10. Now convinced that something serious had happened, I called the office on my cell phone. (Long ago my father assured me that one day we'd all have Dick Tracy two-way wrist radios; I guess cell phones count.) I could

not get a circuit. I found a pay phone, which to my surprise gave me a dial tone. I called my assistant. Her message came on, reminding me that she had planned to be out that day. For a live person, her voice said, press the star key. For the first time in my life, I think, I pressed that key and heard a recorded message that the School was closed. It was 9:15.

It was official. Something horrible had happened. Until that day, School had never closed for anything other than snow, and large amounts of it, at that.

I got back in my car and as I headed north learned about the Pentagon and for the first time heard the radio use the words “terrorist attacks.” When I got home about twenty minutes later I tried to phone my wife, but the circuits were jammed, and remained so until the next day. (I finally managed to send her an email message that I was okay: the Internet worked.) Otherwise, I was cut off. The TV showed me the collapse of the towers. After fifteen minutes, I turned it off. I figured I’d learned all I was going to learn until much later in the day.

Alone at home, cut off from the world, I decided to do something wholly unrelated to the day’s events. But what? In some desperation, I pulled the collected Sherlock Holmes stories off the shelf—I don’t know why—and began to read. Within eight pages, Watson was explaining to Holmes that he was back in London, retired from Army medical service after having been wounded in Afghanistan. The year was 1881. Nothing seems to change.

I was home until the following Monday, when we managed to gather as a staff and faculty to discuss what came next. (We deans had been on the phone throughout the week in marathon conference calls, sometimes lasting three hours at a stretch, to work through all the problems.)

To get around the lower part of the city on Monday, September 17, you had to use public transportation. All those of our staff and faculty who were drivers now were remitted to subways or maybe cabs. But they could go only so far. We were forced off at Canal Street, about four blocks up from the School. There we were met by police barricades and a phalanx of men in blue lining Canal Street. They were very polite and very stern. They would let you through if you showed them two forms of identification. One had to have a picture and the other had to show that you worked within what we now understood was a war zone. There were no cars on the roads. It was one of the eeriest moments I have ever experienced,

walking down a couple of blocks in the middle of a deserted Manhattan street, about six blocks from City Hall, which a week before had been choked with traffic.

About six of us, I think, maintained perfect composure (or came close). It was our job to convince everyone that things were okay and that we could all get back to the business of running a school, offering classes, and simultaneously, comfort to the students. Everyone else was manifestly not composed, not reassured, not relieved to be back, not at all sure that we could carry on.

The students for a very long time were the most unconsolable. By now it is a platitude, but we discovered for ourselves, as an original observation, that we are dealing with a generation of Americans for whom the country has never been other than invincible and prosperous. Come to social and political awareness for the most part in the Nineties, these are students who cannot remember a world in which my namesake was not a senator. *This could not be happening* seemed to be the common thought. *This just wasn't fair*. There were things to be done: *this wasn't part of the plan*.

Although classes resumed on Sept. 24 (and I spent days rebuilding a schedule that months before had taken weeks to design), things didn't look the same or feel the same. Miraculously, no one from the School community was killed or injured, even though several of our people lived close by and many of our adjuncts and students had offices at the towers. (Four alums, we later learned, had died.)

Back at School, we had counselors, psychotherapists, and others of that ilk populating conference rooms for students to confide in. (We also discovered that many students would not avail themselves of these services because the bar examiners in New York ask whether the applicant has ever sought such help.) The faculty voted to permit students to take one course on a pass-fail basis, the first time we have ever permitted an ungraded course for students at large.

Things began to settle down. I was going to say "return to normal," but that's not true. Nothing is normal. The awful smell that pervaded our world finally abated and has now apparently vanished, perhaps because the fires are out. Many faculty, staff, and students wanted assurance that we were not breathing deadly particles. Though the Environmental Protection Agency—and even Rudy

Guiliani—denied the danger, how could they know? Then there was the anthrax moment, when several faculty members got an anonymous letter addressed in a block hand with no return address: turned out to be merely a crank, needing a lawyer, who was blanketing the area law school professors seeking help. Transportation woes continue. Some streets are still blocked (and cops seem permanently stationed on our corner). New Jersey commuters are the hardest hit. No longer able to take the Path trains to the WTC and unable to drive through the tunnels or over the bridges below 63rd Street by themselves, students and faculty alike are now forced onto trains and subways that are mobbed and that must be taken uptown to get downtown. Tack on an extra hour on any given day to cross the Hudson. My commute has not been seriously derailed. Although the No. 9 train has been suspended since September 11, the 1 train still runs its route and takes me to my stop, though the rerouting and congestion can cost me at least a half an hour extra (on top of what was already a 75-minute trip) on any given day. Every once in a while we are commanded to get off the subway at some random station, the police being in an investigatory mood somewhere up the line. My commute home one night climbed above three hours.

Thankfully, that *annus horribilis*, 2001, is now behind us (I quote Queen Elizabeth’s phrase, referring to an earlier year, though my spelling may be shaky). It was a dreadful year. We can hope that there will be some joy in rebuilding.

## Richard A. Matasar

Dean and Professor

*The Rule of Law When There Are No Rules*

(published in *The National Law Journal*, October 15, 2001)

Classes have resumed at New York Law School, an institution that for more than a century has been an integral part of a community that was deeply shaken by the events of Sept. 11. As educators at a campus in lower Manhattan’s Tribeca neighborhood, mere blocks from the devastation, we know that business is not “as usual” but that we must nonetheless create a new normalcy.

Although much has changed in our lives, and too many vivid memories of that fateful day endure, we are now back at work. Although our school was evacuated, closed for nearly a week without power, telephone, Internet access or even running water, we must look forward. We owe that to our students who worked at the World Trade Center, to those in externships directly related to their academic program and to the many other students (and their kin) who are firefighters, police officers and construction workers at Ground Zero.

We have been affected profoundly, but the stories of our students give us the inspiration to pick up where we left off and strive to reach even greater heights. The example of one student, Gerald Simpkins, who helped carry a wheelchair-bound coworker to safety from the 69th floor of Tower One and went back to the site the following days to help with relief efforts makes it plain: We must return to our jobs.

Thankfully, no students, faculty members or staff were lost, and we were able to return to a physical plant that was remarkably unscathed. As we move forward, we are taking steps to come to terms with the emotional trauma that terrorism has wrought in our lives and our neighborhood. We will have town meetings to share our painful experiences and strengthen our resolve to heal and rebound. We have brought in grief and trauma counselors to help us recover our sense of security. We will participate in memorial services, relief efforts and community activities to take back what has been taken from us.

*A perplexing question*

But soon, we must face a much more perplexing, and unique, question: What do the events of the last week mean to us as legal educators?

The very concept of legal education is under strain. We teach that there is a rule of law that provides civilized nations with methods to resolve disputes, to achieve stability in commercial relations, to permit citizens to file grievances against their government, to protect minorities from oppression by majorities, to preserve freedom of speech, travel and religion, to allow governments to negotiate with each other and to give the world assurance that it will not destroy itself in blind aggression. Yet all of our commitments to these cherished principles inevitably will be challenged because our faith in the rule of law has been shaken. In short, what are we to do about the rule of law when there are no rules?

Law schools revel in questioning all of our beliefs and assumptions. Law teachers force their students to ask why a rule exists, whether it can be improved and sometimes whether rules matter at all. After peeling away our students' blind adherence to rules, we hope to instill in them a respect for the flexibility of law and its extraordinary ability to adjust as times change. We never back off from exposing weakness in existing law but return to the same theme: Without law, and a commitment to civilized resolution of our problems, we will surely sink to the lowest level of behavior.

So, since returning to classes on Sept. 24, our mission has been clear. We will explore how to bring terrorists lawfully to justice. We will continue our debates about the death penalty, the contours of due process and the line between privacy and security. We will push for an understanding of how to use international law to deal with individuals across borders, how to share information, form coalitions and unify those with dramatically different cultures and traditions. We will look to our Constitution as a bulwark to protect us against our worst instincts, to remind ourselves of the need for tolerance and for the sure, swift and lawful punishment that may be exacted under due process of law. Our government may seek to curtail some civil liberties of our citizens and our guests, but we cannot cross the line to lawlessness and also hope to continue to be a world leader in the expansion of democratic principles.

Through the rule of law we will survive this crisis, overcome those who create chaos, and assure ourselves that the world will commit to laws that can be applied with force against transgressors. My colleagues and I join with law faculties across the country in our commitment, through teaching, scholarship and advocacy, to bolstering the nation's confidence in the rule of law.

*The New Normalcy* (from a previously unpublished essay)

- “Normalcy.”
- “The return to business as usual.”
- “Getting on with our lives.”
- “Moving forward.”
- “Better than ever.”

The phrases seem to be multiplying by the day, but they all imply the same

thing: tragedy, no matter how catastrophic, cannot stem the will of the American people to restore the way of life that defined our society before the terrible events of September 11th. But things are not the same; “normalcy” now includes fear, anger, and uncertainty. We face a new challenge: to redefine “business as usual” and create a new norm.

Since September 11, my work as the Dean of New York Law School, eight blocks from the World Trade Center, has changed dramatically. We have learned to console our students, faculty, staff, and graduates over the loss of loved ones. We have created a much more visible security presence and worried about our commitments to openness and access. We have dealt with trauma, anger, and fear, using nothing more than our dedication to our community as guidance in conversations none of us had ever anticipated, let alone engaged in, before. We have repressed our frustration with those who seem overly concerned about themselves in the face of the massive needs of other people suffering from acute problems. We have even mediated the intellectual debates between ferocious advocates of legal (or extra-legal retaliation) and dedicated champions of caution, diplomacy, and multilateral legalistic structure—none of whom will really be on the front lines of making decisions. Through it all, however, we keep returning to an overarching and troublesome question: where do we go from here?

It turns out that comfort is much closer than we might have imagined. We need a new normalcy, informed by the events around us, touched by each community story, but also firmly rooted in our foundation as a law school dedicated to learning law and then taking action.

First, we are a community. We often may disagree with each other, but we always remember our ties and are mindful of our responsibilities to one another. Our debates, as spirited as ever, have taken on a compelling urgency. Theoretical arguments about restricting liberty are quite real to our international students, whose only crime is a nation of origin in the Middle East or dark skin. Debates are tempered by the stark reality that we are no longer engaging in theoretical academic exercises, but rather that real people are going to be deeply affected by real policies, and that people will look to our profession to help define the proper borders between liberty and security.

Second, our craft is more important than ever. With emotions on the surface,



our passions are driving us to use law in novel and perhaps even dangerous ways. We know that in any legal system we can act first and justify later. Nonetheless, even in our most aggressively result-oriented moments, we also know that reason is better than reaction, that carefully crafted arguments and policies withstand the test of time, and that logic and proof provide better justifications for action than does raw power.

Third, more than ever, we are bridging the academy and the profession. Theories of justice may seem like indulgent abstractions in the face of the pressing needs of real clients in crisis situations. But theories of justice give us real justifications for altering ordinary rules to meet dire needs without unnecessary procedural delay. Working with practicing lawyers reminds legal educators that the best theory is one that in practice delivers what people need when they need it.

Fourth, the seemingly great divides—between teacher and student, administration and faculty, schools and their graduates—are indeed quite small. The shared imperative to get our school running again, communicate with each other, and start the process of restoring our spirits and regaining our equilibrium overwhelms differences and trivializes anyone’s advocacy of narrow self-interest. Never have I seen more hugs, smiles, shared tears, and commitment, than when we returned to classes. Every member of our community understands that it’s all about educating our students, and that they are on the front lines of constructing solutions for people whose lives were upended by terror.

Normalcy is now impossible because we are hyper-normal, acutely aware that many things we have taken for granted as citizens and as people now may be taken away. While our grief may be receding and our anger directed at more specific targets, we face a new challenge—to return to our educational missions, chastened by events, dedicated to offering the best teaching, scholarship, and service possible, open to the needs of our communities, and committed to constructing a new normalcy.

*In Observance of the Six-Month Anniversary*

March 11, 2002

Colleagues,

On the way to work this morning I was struck with how ordinary the day seemed—commuters reading papers, drinking coffee, arguing about sports,

avoiding eye contact with each other. Outside, the sky is as clear as I can remember, just another beautiful New York day. Yet, on another crystal clear morning, just six months ago, similar morning rituals were shaken as never before. So, this ordinary day portends more than ordinary routines; it is a day to reflect.

Six months have passed since September 11. We have changed mayors, forgotten about contested presidential elections, gone to war, had the economy bottom (and begin rebounding), seen baseball and football come and go, to be replaced by March madness, and have returned to the activities that give us pleasure and joy. Nonetheless, we pause to remember this day that our good fortune depends on much that is beyond our control, that our fate is entwined with others, and that all we take for granted is contingent upon events and people with motives that we cannot understand.

Fatalism, however, is rarely a comforting philosophy. We mingle with those thoughts more positive visions—like living our lives to the fullest every day, utilizing our talents to bring value to others, knowing that ordinary citizens can be heroes, and selflessly sharing our lives with each other. We understand to the core that we may be knocked down, but we can get up and move forward. We know that our voices cannot be silenced, that patriotism does not mean giving up cherished liberties, and that supporting our leaders means cheering them when they are right, questioning them when we do not understand, and criticizing them when they are wrong.

The last six months have given us many lessons, but to me they can be summarized simply. We must grieve and learn from our grief. We must mourn and then rebuild. We must look forward with optimism, but never forget the past.

Six months has seen New York Law School respond to challenges that we never imagined—losing friends and family, closing our facilities, passing through checkpoints, dealing with questionable air quality, and coping with the ordinary pressure of legal education while dealing with extraordinary things around us. We have also seen our faculty, students, and graduates come together as never before, to support each other and help their community rebuild. Today, let's hold tight to our memories, keep looking forward, and always remember that as a community we care for each other, that we demand the best of all of us, and that we require that we live up to our ideals.

## Jennifer Meyer

Class of 2005, evening division

The support of my friends and family has been invaluable. Thank you. I am coping as best as I can under the circumstances. It is a strange emotional time. I am happy to be safe and unharmed. However, since I was spared, I find myself getting angry that my law school experience is in disarray and that I lost my job. I am angry about feeling afraid. I am distressed that the city that I love and dreamed of for so long, now frightens me. The buildings that I admired, now intimidate me. I think about how difficult this semester is going to be and how I wanted this dream for so long and it was ruined. Then, as these thoughts enter my head, I feel guilty. I open my window and hear the clattering of the rescue operations, the sirens. I see the posters of loved ones that never came home and I feel selfish. I feel petty that I cry that my little world is less glamorous or that my routine is shattered. Yes, this is not why I moved to NYC, but no one wanted this tragedy, and everyone's life is affected.

Yesterday, I participated in the most beautiful expression of grief and love. On the promenade, where I watched the horror, candles and memorials appeared. I saw the skyline with smoke pouring out in the background, while candles and flowers framed the foreground. The air was full of Spanish and English vocals praying to one G-d. I saw grown men holding candles with tears running down their cheeks. Three ten year old girls carrying a poster up for their loved one, keeping their hope alive. When the night ended, the sky began to cry. The winds hollered and the hail pounded in fury. I sat in my room and closed my eyes, praying for a peaceful tomorrow. I prayed for the people underground, I prayed for the rescuers fighting for lives. When I woke this morning, I wrote this message.

Although this is not why I came to NYC, I know the road ahead will be monumental. I appreciate the support of all my friends and family. If it has appeared that I am calling out for help in my messages, I have. Thank you for being there for me, it makes all the difference. Take care of yourselves.

Love, Jennifer

## Zuhayr A. Moghrabi

Adjunct Professor

Did I know, could I have ever imagined on that morning when I opened my door, as I do every morning, to pick up the newspaper, skimming over the headlines, that something horrific would happen within the hour?

After reading the headlines came my shaving while listening to the news on the radio. “We interrupt this news for a special report,” the announcer said “a plane has crashed into the World Trade Center tower.” I looked out my bathroom window. It was a beautiful sunny day, no fog, an unusually clear day. How could this happen? I immediately went to the TV, then saw a second plane crash into Tower II. My mind must be playing tricks, I thought. This couldn’t be true. I am watching a bad film. It could not be real. But when the images of the crashes kept repeating and repeating, I realized that it was real. It was crazy, horrific and real.

Although it still seems like a bad dream, a nightmare, looking back at all that has happened during the past month since September 11; the rescue, the heroes, the courage, the unbelievable strength that emerged from this terrible crisis, I think what a great country we live in.

At first, I became very angry at those who had perpetrated this horrible tragedy. In time, my anger turned to compassion and admiration as I watched the sadness of the families of victims. How in their grief and sadness, there was still strength and hope. It gave me such a feeling of pride that so many responded, cared and shared.

There is an old proverb that says that “always out of something bad comes something good.” That shocking morning of September 11 has brought us together with a greater faith and understanding and strength than ever before. That we will not be intimidated. We will not live in fear. We will endure and be stronger than ever, united.

My sadness increased with the loss of some friends in this tragedy.

## Martin Morris

Class of 2004, day division

*Among*

Caught  
somewhere in  
the ashes  
of future  
histories,  
the skyline  
broken  
as a noseless  
sphinx  
and papers  
tumbling autumn  
from a summer  
sky,  
we walked  
over a foreign  
moonscape

of photographs,  
a lint brush,  
a child's doll. . .

Yet,  
through  
the candlelight  
their voices  
echo otherworldly  
still gathered  
with us  
at breakfast.  
The good  
table,  
its white  
cloth  
soiled  
forever.

## Heli Myyryläinen-Awany

Class of 1998, evening division

### *My Experience Working with the “9/11 Detainees”*

I got my first 9/11 detained client when a former adjustment of status client frantically walked into my office the second week of November and told me an Egyptian friend of his is detained at the Passaic County Jail, Paterson, NJ. I was reluctant to take the case, because I had never handled clients in removal proceedings. However, I agreed to help, figuring that I could quickly refresh my memory on issues of detention, bond and relief from removal. I made an appointment to see my new client at the jail that same afternoon. Even gaining access to the jail was a new experience: all attorneys have to process an attorney identification requiring fingerprinting, photographing, and a “background” check. I felt as if I was being booked to become a member of the inmate population rather than gaining access as an attorney.

My client told that he is held in a room with 35 to 50 other 9/11 detainees and complained about inadequacy of food, asking if I could deposit him some money for canteen use. I agreed. My client was picked up after his landlord had informed the FBI about him and his friends. He was picked up when he made an appointment with the landlord to pick up mail from the apartment he had left when his friends were arrested earlier. I interviewed my client about his immigration history, place of residency and employment, assets, education, criminal history here and elsewhere and family in the United States and in Egypt. Based on the interview I concluded that he qualifies for no other relief from removal but voluntary departure (VD), and obviously I am trying to get him out on bond. This became the standard answer to all but one of my clients whom I have retained since then.

The work I do involves also a lot of begging. I need to be the one taking care of my clients’ business outside, get power of attorneys for bank accounts, try to solve problems with landlords so that my clients’ belongings are not thrown to the street, beg employers, friends and distant relatives to sign “reference letters.” You do all that, make long distance phone calls, accept collect calls from the jail,

visit the jail, spend hours in the court, only to get a phone call from friends that they really cannot sign anything because they do not want to get involved, or an employer telling me in the end that it really cannot help because they do not want the FBI come snooping around. It is tough to tell a client that suddenly he has nobody outside to help me so that I can help him, and therefore, I will probably not be able to get him out of jail.

When I went to the Newark Immigration Court the first time, I did not know what the procedure was. I had even difficulty finding the correct court room as I did not know who the judge was and because my client's name was not listed on the wall. I found out that "special cases" as these are called, are not posted. In the courtroom, before the proceedings started, I heard other attorneys asking the Service Counsel whether there was a "clearance" for their clients. I had actually prepared to go forward with my bond argument, only to be informed by other attorneys that it would not be wise. I knew that the Attorney General, Ashcroft, had just issued a memo given the Service the right to appeal any bonds over \$10,000 given by the judge before FBI "clearance," and during the 90-day appeal process, my client had to be detained. The practical effect of that memo is though, that the Service would appeal all bonds, and therefore, it is much better to wait a few weeks for the "clearance" to arrive. The detainees' arrival was sort of a spectacle for many as they were brought into the courtroom in shackles. At that time, the hearings were not yet "closed." I entered my appearance, and when the judge learned that there was no "clearance" the case was rescheduled for the following week. It took all of one minute!

The following week the judge ordered everyone out of the courtroom, as the hearings were now "closed." This means that no one else but the respondent, translator, attorney, judge and service counsel are in the courtroom. The scene in the hallway was of disbelief and atmosphere chaotic: detainees held in groups in empty courtrooms, attorneys, translators, friends and family everywhere, and guards trying to keep us all in order. This time, the Service did not bring my client to the court, claiming they could not find him! This has happened to me numerous times since then, and I only wonder how difficult it is to find the detainees. It is not like they are out shopping somewhere!

The day came when there was clearance, but to my great surprise, the Service

opposed any bond since my client had no other relief but voluntary departure, and the Service has no problem giving VD as long as it is under safeguards, meaning the detainees stay incarcerated until the government is ready to put them into plane. However, my argument must have been persuasive enough though, that the judge actually lowered the amount of bond that I had asked for.

In the jail, my first client had apparently distributed my card to many of his friends, as I started getting collect calls from the jail to my office. The inmates are only able to call collect and cannot even use calling cards. At one time I was spending most mornings in jail interviewing clients. Most of them were either Egyptians or Pakistanis, had been pro se during their hearings but had been refused bond or did not realize that they had the right to ask for bond and others were in the beginning of the whole process. They had mainly been picked up at their place of employment, some in their apartment building raids. One was picked up because his bank had called the FBI about a client of theirs who regularly sends wire transfers to the West Bank. The money was to pay for his father's cancer treatment!

Every detainee seems to want to get out on bond, file for asylum or marry a U.S. citizen which they know is the easiest and fastest way to stay in the U.S. I have had grown men cry in tears in front of me, but most accept the inevitable, that the only thing I can do is to get them out of jail with a VD of 120 days. They are medical doctors, U.N. workers with Ph.D., successful business owners, computer programmers, high school teachers, etc. The other group is detainees who were supposed to leave under safeguards. I had no idea why the government is still keeping them in jail at taxpayers' expense a month, month and a half after they were to leave. These are people who now want to ask for bond and arrange their own departure. After inquiring from other attorneys with more experience, I was told that "I would be wasting my time and energy" and that no judge is going to rule in favor of my motion, assuming that I, as a young attorney, even knew how to put the Motion for Bond Redetermination together. Some suggest that I could file a Mandamus in Federal Court to force the government to act. Easier said than done. So I thought maybe I could help by taking a ride to the Hemisphere Center, the INS deportation unite and try to see what was going on, maybe the INS has forgotten about these people.



What I found out was that either the Embassies are not renewing passports, and I do not know how to force a foreign Embassy to issue travel documents, or then in the early cases, when the procedure was not clear yet, the file is missing either the FBI “clearance” or the INS clearance letter which comes from the INS Headquarters in Washington, D.C. I was amazed that the Deportation Unit could not just call their bosses in Washington and see what was the problem with the letter. I knew the letter had to come before posting a bond, and it usually come within two days of the judge’s order. Now I have to figure out who issues these letters and how to make the INS issue them.

Many attorneys shared the same frustration as I did, and a meeting at a Newark attorney Regis Fernandez’s office was held in the early December in hopes of trying to coordinate attorneys’ efforts in trying to make some sense out of these proceedings and to see if any federal lawsuits on the issues of closed hearings, general secrecy about the proceedings and access to the detainees could be filed. Representatives from the NY and NJ ACLU, National Lawyers Guild, HELP (a professional non-profit Islamic organization collecting donations to pay for attorney fees and trying to help the detainees) along with some 20 attorneys, some of who already had handled these cases, attended the meeting. Since that time I have been in contact with the NY ACLU helping them identify individuals who have been given VD under safeguards but who are still detained a month past the departure date. Unfortunately, an ACLU attorney, although I had given written permission to the jail for them to go and speak with my clients for legal purposes, have been unsuccessful. Apparently, the INS will not allow any organizational attorneys to interview detainees! What I feel now is that all my good intentions have backfired, though. Even though all the guards at Passaic County Jail know me and the clients I come to see, a G-28 must be filed at the jail, and no other attorney can visit the detainee.

I have also noticed a change for worse in the judges’ and Service Counsels’ attitudes towards these proceedings. In the beginning, even though procedures seemed to change every time I was in court, I soon learned the song and dance, and the judges and Service counsels seemed to be reasonable when discussing bond issues. Now, the attitude is that Service does not want to release anyone, period. Judges are overworked and tired of the system, and any predictability in

the process is gone. I do not know what to tell my clients any more. I used to know the judge, and they knew me as there are only a handful of attorneys constantly appearing in these proceedings, and I used to predict what kind of a bond deal I could get. Not anymore. Two weeks ago one of my clients was not brought to court (they brought someone with the same last name but different A-number). The judge scolded the Service and told me she could still go ahead with the bond hearing if I waived my client's presence, which I did. No problem with the bond. A week later I was in front of the same judge when again another client of mine who had just received clearance after 90 days in jail was not brought in. The judge did not even question the Service as to why it failed to produce my client. I thought I could still ask for bond, after all the same judge had done just that a week earlier, I received a frustrated response from the bench telling me that the judge would not hear any bond arguments in absentia.

I cannot understand why the INS has become so unreasonable lately. It does not seem to serve their interest. Until now the public has not really known what goes on in the courtrooms and in jails, but soon it will. I am sure that after the initial shock of the 9/11 wears out and the public starts to hear about some of the individual detainee cases, it would make more sense for the INS to become a little more lenient and easier to work with. I have also noticed a change in the attitude of attorneys and others in the court's hallways towards the detainees. In late November, early December, the arrival of the detainees seemed to be a spectacle. Now, I see attorneys avoiding eye contact with the group, many lower their head, and some even turn away, trying to avoid any human contact or reaction with them. I do not know what we are supposed to feel, how are we supposed to react, I only personally know that the detainees are human beings, and only one or two of the thousands detained have been found to have any connection to 9/11 incident. Although, many do not qualify for any immigration benefits, there is still a great need for pro bono attorneys, or those who could take cases with reduced fees. Currently only about 10-15% of all detainees in Passaic County Jail have legal council.

## Salvatore Piscopo

Class of 2005, evening division

I can remember sitting in Prof. Mills class when we first came back after the whole WTC situation. She asked the class a question very similar to this request, for feelings on the attack. While not prompting or forcing anyone to say anything we didn't want to, she of course was willing to listen to what we had to say, and felt that perhaps the words of fellow students may have, in some way, alleviated some pain or confusion about the world of violence and intolerance they had been unwillingly thrust into.

I had been doing some thinking and personal reflection when school was closed down that week, and decided to share it with the class, just as I'll share it here. There is no way anything anyone can say will bring back any of those lost in the attack, and any attempt to offer words of comfort will, at the very best, be a valiant effort to console our peers and colleagues. Personally, I tried to figure out just how my life fits into this world now. Here I am, a single student at a law school, and all of a sudden, it meant very little in the grand scheme of the world. Despite everything I had done in my life to try to succeed and get myself to this point, it all seemed, well, meaningless.

This fact bothered me right up until I told the class that the only thing that we can do, as a law school community, as a city, as a country, is exist with a mindset of making our lives have meaning. To not do so would makes the deaths of everyone involved in complete dishonor. All of those people involved in the fiasco just blocks from here were giving purpose to their lives. Whether it was a single mom making ends meet to support her kid or an accountant at a blue chip firm reeling in serious cash, they gave their lives purpose through their work. Each of them gave something different, something wonderful to the world. I think that during this, many of us might wonder, just as I did, "where do I fit into this, and what exactly am I doing here? Am I still motivated? Is this what I want?" The beautiful fact that comes out of all of this misery is, you don't need to wonder if you have purpose, you already do. When you hug your kid at night and tuck them into bed, you do, when you help a friend through a rough relationship breakup,

you do, when you go to class and make a comment that may give someone an idea that may someday help the world, you do. Life without purpose is meaningless, and as humans, we strive to find value through our individuality, be it in our life goals, political or personal views about each other and the world around us.

Although ignorant intolerance of these differences may be partly what led to the tragedy, they are the essence of what has defined this country for the past 224 years. I was educated in school and taught by my parents that America has no limits, that if you want something bad enough and are willing to work for it, it can be achieved. In spite of all of this chaos, where it would have been easy to give up even a little hope, my heart has grown stronger, my mind more resistant to injustice and fear and my pride in the people who have given their lives up so that strangers might have been able to live grows. The pride grows in every child I see smiling at a fireman, every baby that is born into freedom, and every tear and ounce of generosity that we “hard ass” New Yorkers now seem to have in immeasurable amounts.

So, as I become more educated, and time passes on as we reel back and rebuild as a country I will be thinking this, which is what I will leave you, the reader with. Those who can't dream, cannot achieve. Those who know only fear, will never know just how far they can take themselves. And I will be damned if the acts of a few evil souls will ruin the dreams I have for myself, this country and this world. That isn't what America is about, that isn't what I'm about, and that shouldn't be what any of us is about. Black or white, female or male, Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Buddhist, whatever, we are all in this together and now collectively know what it feels like to have our hearts broken and dreams shattered. But, just as a storm cloud can merely temporarily block out the light, this cloud, while never being able to truly pass, will be vanquished by the light present within our hearts, minds and thoughts of how we should live, treat each other and exist in the world. A world that not only suffers at this type of injustice, but also one that will shine in a future full of communication, peace and prosperity. This is not only the right way, it is the only way.

God Bless,  
Salvatore Piscopo

## Sadiq Reza

Associate Professor

The following is from an interview with Prof. Reza in *L Magazine* (January 2002)

A law school challenged: Legal education goes on—seven blocks from ground zero. Here’s one professor’s story. | By Marci Alboher Nusbaum

New York Law School, which sits seven blocks from the rubble that was once the World Trade Center, will never be the same. Because of its location, everyone in the law school community has a story to tell about where they were on Sept. 11.

Having watched the towers come down from his Battery Park City apartment, he escaped lower Manhattan, but never made it to school that day. And once he left his apartment, it would be nearly two months before he could move back home. As he tried to put his personal life back together, his professional life took on an increasing importance in a changed world.

Until that day, Professor Reza had dedicated his career to two areas: criminal law and procedure, and Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. “In one day,” he says, “all the issues I was prepared to look into over the course of my career were suddenly yanked to the forefront.”

With little time to prepare, he was called upon to educate the law school community on matters ranging from an analysis of the terrorist attacks under Islamic law (see below) to how the month of Ramadan relates to the study and practice of law.

The law school closed completely for two weeks; with no power, telephone service, running water, or train service, downtown had become uninhabitable and inaccessible. The day before the school reopened, the faculty held a teach-in for the law school community to share thoughts and feelings about what had happened. Professor Reza shed his professorial role that day. “I was having great difficulty being logical, analytical, and cerebral as lawyers, law professors, and law students are expected to be. I was consumed with the human dimension.”

As he got back to work, Reza learned that teaching criminal law presented new

challenges. “It is harder to teach and also feel grounded in the material since it is changing dramatically as we speak,” says Reza.

“The daily work of keeping up is also tremendously different,” says Reza. He often learns many of the developments in law enforcement the way the public does: by reading *The New York Times* and reports from other media outlets. He also makes sure to go to the original source materials and stays in close contact with advocacy organizations like the Council on American Islamic Relations and the ACLU. “But the students shouldn’t feel the weight of that burden. My job is to distill the present agitation into meaningful concepts and policy discussion so that the students both learn from the subject matter and are provoked by it.”

The war and its implications for criminal law and procedure spill over into Reza’s classes on a regular basis. Recently, Reza allowed a class period to take a detour from the syllabus to discuss the news of the day: Attorney General Ashcroft’s release of certain information on the number of people detained and some of the bases for their detention. He had planned to talk about the Fifth Amendment right against compulsory self-incrimination, but he says he can’t imagine teaching in a way that did not allow for such spontaneous discussions. “The students are showing a huge need to work these issues out,” he explains, “especially given the way our school was so profoundly and uniquely affected.” Even with some parts of the syllabus rushed, he has made sure to cover the entire course, since he feels it is important for students to have an understanding of the basic doctrinal concepts.

Reza, who is an American-born Muslim of Indian heritage, now has a greater appreciation of what it might be like to be an immigrant from one of the countries whose citizens are being singled out. With all the talk about racial profiling, he jokingly says, “If the FBI or Justice Dept. continues to seek lists of Muslim or Middle Eastern people at schools or universities, I would certainly be on the list.”

But he is not worried for himself. “There have been a few strange looks on the street,” he says, “but I’m not quick to attribute motives to those kind of fleeting encounters. The people I worry about are the students, cab drivers, bodega owners, and others who are vulnerable.”

*The events of 9/11: under Islamic law*

*Professor Reza spoke to his law school about how the events of September 11 would be analyzed under Islamic law. He shared a bit of that analysis with L contributing editor Marci Nusbaum:*

Islamic law generally derives from four sources: first, the Quran revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century and believed by Muslims to be the word of God; second, the Sunna, or the collected sayings and traditions of the Prophet, which augment the teachings of the Quran; third, the ijma', the consensus of learned jurists and scholars; and fourth, qiyas, which is analogical reasoning to other authority, similar to the use of precedent in Anglo-American jurisprudence. There are several formal schools of Islamic law and they base their legal opinions on these sources to varying degrees. Since there is no supreme authority in Islamic law, there are different viewpoints, much like there are majority and minority perspectives in common law in the U.S.

That said, the general consensus of opinion is that the events of September 11 violated Islamic law under three different principles:

1. War should be waged defensively only;
2. Illegitimate targets such as women, children, and the elderly should not be harmed;
3. War should only be authorized by a legitimate head of state.

In a 1998 fatwah [religious ruling], in which Osama Bin Laden called for war against America, he invoked the justification of self-defense. Even if this were somehow a valid claim, however, it seems clear that the second and third principles have been violated. All just war doctrines permit the incidental killing of innocents when necessary, but there was no apparent necessity for killing innocents on September 11. Moreover, Osama Bin Laden is hardly a legitimate head of state—even though he might assert authority as a spiritual leader.

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## Andrea Risoli

Class of 2000, evening division, and Adjunct Professor

*WTC—Life Without You:*

I cannot believe what they have done to you. What maybe we all have done to you. I want you back. I want it all to go away. It's an overwhelming sadness and makes my heart much too heavy to bear. Where are you?

For me, you have always been close by for over two decades. I need you now more than ever. Where are you?

I literally grew up inside your insurmountable mighty strength. Hopefully, you passed some of that along to me because I need it now more than ever. Where are you?

You showed me how to be an adult. What it was like. How it could hurt. But, how cool it was to be independent. And, how cool it was to accomplish things on my own.

You made me tough, you made me work, you made me work hard, you molded my values and who I am today. You laid the foundation.

I got to know you well. I was lucky to have so much time alone with you. From the start, you showed me how mighty you were and how big you were going to be.

You remember: a scared seventeen year old, who was left all alone and no other commercial tenants around, with a bunch of poinsettia plants, and a long line of customers I did not know what to do with. But, I did it. We figured it out together. I will never forget.

You opened my eyes. I was the first to know what you were capable of. I told them, but they had to see for themselves. And they did. They sure did.

You let me dream. On some early mornings in One World Trade, on 106 and 107, sitting there by myself, I used to dream. You were my favorite place to dream. I would move from window to window to see how far you reached. You made me see how far I could reach.

We started together. I saw you grow, you saw me grow, and then we grew apart, but never once did we wander too far from each other. We had to keep an eye on each other. In fact, almost every day, busy or not, we managed to look each



other in the eye. What am I going to do without you? You were there for good times, the oh so good times and for the bad times, the oh so bad times, but never this bad. Where are you?

My memories of you are full, lush, and sometimes bittersweet. But, what is life without the good and the bad. I know that more than ever now.

Now, each night on the long walk out of the war zone, your zone, which we all have become so quickly familiar with, I walk with many. We walk in silence and disbelief. It is a deafening quiet. The same insulated feeling of a deserted city street immediately after a blizzard calms down.

Only this feeling puts all my senses on high alert. Constantly, I turn and look up for my old friend. I cannot see you. I cannot find you. But, I can feel you and then I breathe you in.

You have a spirit, a soul, and a personality, but you always did. I guess its too much because now you have so many. Even the ones you left behind, you took a piece of.

I don't know what is going to happen without you. I guess that is what makes it so difficult and frightening. I do know how proud I am of you. I hope I make you just as proud and that we all make you proud.

You already have changed things, at least around here, for the better. People are smiling at each other, helping each other, and uniting with each other in sorrow for what we lost.

I have a feeling you will always be there mightier than ever. You will show them all—something I already know—you are indestructible. You fell so gracefully but you will never fall from grace. In fact, we might not see you, but you stand taller than ever.

From the day you were born, you never did stop teaching me lessons. Maybe I cannot see you. But, I do know where you are. You are here. You will never leave. So, instead of seeing you all the time, I will have to make peace only feeling your mighty strength. I guess, I could live with it. I guess I have to. I am glad that I can still call on you for strength. But, I will still miss seeing you my mighty friend.

## Tanina Rostain

Associate Professor; Co-Director, Center for Professional Values and Practice;  
Research affiliate, Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies<sup>1</sup>

*When the Towers Collapse Outside Your Window: Teaching Law in the Aftermath of 9/11*

I now teach law in the shadow of death. Nine blocks from my law school several thousand people lie buried in a mass grave. Considering that so many of our students worked as interns in the World Trade Center, lived in close vicinity, commuted through the plaza, and serve as firefighters and police officers, we were extraordinarily lucky: We did not lose a single one. But there are missing family members, friends and at least three graduates. And hundreds of our students—and not a few of my colleagues and coworkers—witnessed the gruesome events of September 11 first hand on their way to the school that morning.

Our building was without power, water, telephone or other amenities for more than a week after the events. A month later, some services are still intermittent, despite the tireless round the clock efforts of providers in the City. As you look downtown from the corner where our law school stands, the shape of the enormous pile of debris has changed over the past weeks: Earlier, two jagged gothic shards of the Towers jutted hundreds of feet into the sky. Now it is harder to make out the disaster site, except when evening descends, and the area is illuminated by huge bright lights. Smoke still wafts up from the area, and sometimes, when the wind shifts, the air around and inside the school smells acrid. (When the smell drifts through, people around school exchange explanations about which building remnants are currently being demolished and removed.) Fire

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<sup>1</sup>Thanks to Hiram Chodosh, Stephen Ellmann, Richard Schottenfeld, and Matthew Wilkes for comments on an earlier draft. This essay is based on Tanina Rostain, “When the Towers Collapse Outside Your Window: Teaching Law in the Aftermath of 9/11,” forthcoming in *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*. It also borrows from Tanina Rostain, “Professional Commitments in a Changed World,” 70 *Fordham L. Rev.* 1811 (2002).

trucks, police cars, construction machinery, tow trucks, Con Ed trucks, AT&T trucks, temporary Verizon phone banks and emergency generators clutter streets and sidewalks. Men wearing construction hats and facemasks are a routine sight, and work identification card necklaces have become a necessary fashion accessory for men and women. Walking from the subway station, it is difficult to leave the streets and enter the building. It is even more difficult, once inside the building, to go back outside. After a two-week hiatus, we started teaching again.

The events of Sept. 11 created a host of challenges for New York Law School. Most immediately, we were faced with communication and safety challenges. Given the practical disruptions that resulted from the attacks, including in particular the failure of our email servers, our first imperative was to find means of contacting our students and staff to determine whether they or their loved ones had been harmed and to provide them with information about the school. We also needed to ensure that our students felt safe coming back into our building. A second and equally pressing imperative was to mobilize resources to address the grief and trauma suffered by the members of our community. A third set of challenges were pedagogic: We needed to consider how we would get back to teaching. What should we say when we resumed our classes? What other forums could we create to teach and think about ongoing events? Finally we faced challenges—or better yet in this case, opportunities—that related to our commitment to public service. Like so many others, members of our community (students, staff and faculty) felt a powerful impulse to participate in relief efforts. Our aim was to channel these impulses into responses that tapped our professional expertise and would pave the way to longer term commitments to public service.<sup>2</sup>

### *I. Safety and Communication Challenges*

In the hours and days immediately following the attack, communication and safety issues were, of course, the most pressing. With our building inaccessible and our server down, we had no systematic way of contacting staff, colleagues or

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<sup>2</sup> In all these areas, we were fortunate to enjoy the strong leadership of Richard Matasar, our dean, who worked tirelessly from the moment the first Tower was hit to fashion appropriate collective and institutional responses to the attacks.

students. Members of our deans' office spent countless hours in the first days tracking down phone numbers and alternative emails stored on home computers in an intensive effort to account for everybody. Many faculty and students—having little more to do than sit at home and watch the television news—also joined in these efforts. Within days, too, our administration had reestablished our Internet site on an off-premises server so we could coordinate and centralize communication with our students and each other.

During the first week, the administration's energies were focused on resuming classes quickly and getting as many students as possible to return to school. To that end, it was necessary to check that our building was structurally sound, get electrical power and other utilities functioning without interruption and assure ourselves, as best we could, that the air quality did not present health risks. When the doors reopened, we wanted to be able to convey a single unequivocal message: The building was safe; we were glad to be back together; and we were ready to deal with the needs and concerns occasioned by the events. (Students' practical needs ran the gamut: Some had lost their books fleeing on September 11th; some were not able to get into their apartments, which were in the affected zone; many had lost part-time jobs and internships; many also had transportation difficulties as a result of suspended services.)

During the subsequent months, we continued to deal with service interruptions, air quality issues, and intense and disruptive street noise and activity. From one day to the next, we could never be confident that any of these problems had been permanently resolved. Throughout this period, the Dean and the administration instituted an expansive open door policy and made communication in every available venue (including town meetings, informational posters, emails and our website) a consistent priority so that all members of the community were regularly informed about issues as they arose.

## *II. Grief and Trauma*

It was all too obvious that the events of September 11 would create intense psychological challenges for the members of our community. When our faculty first reconvened in the building, mental health professionals were on hand to talk with us individually and collectively about our experiences and reactions and the issues we would likely face with our students. Throughout the semester, our

student services office continued to offer onsite and offsite counseling services for students, faculty and staff. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of mental health professionals in the community, most people who needed counseling or support were able to obtain assistance without charge. As members of the staff and faculty, we had as a central goal to help students and colleagues set aside inhibitions about taking advantage of available services. Our aim was also to address and cabin psychological issues so that we could return to teaching in the classroom.

At the risk of gross oversimplification, psychological reactions revolved around three basic feelings: trauma, grief and fear. Many members of our community, including, in particular, those who had witnessed events first-hand, were traumatized. It is fair to say that all of us experienced tremendous grief. We also suffered collectively from pervasive anxiety that similar events would occur again in our proximity.

By our own assessment, our efforts to address the practical and psychological needs of our students met with substantial success. Although we initially anticipated that upward of two hundred students were at risk of not returning to school after 9/11, only about twenty-five withdrew from school or took a leave of absence. Despite this high rate of retention, we recognize in hindsight that there were occasional lapses in coordinating needs with available services and situations in which we failed to make timely interventions.

### *III. Pedagogic Challenges*

For members of the faculty, some of the most fundamental issues were pedagogic: How did we resume teaching? How did we enable our students to return to the study of law? How did we focus on teaching ourselves? What did we say at the beginning of the first class session? During our initial collective discussion, three basic approaches emerged, which I loosely label the “stoic,” “empathetic,” and “recommitment” approaches.

Several faculty members argued for taking the “stoic” approach. They suggested that the best way to start again was to acknowledge the recent events briefly at the outset of class and then move to a discussion of class materials. These colleagues emphasized that we were not equipped to address the psychological issues that might arise so that it would be best for all to return as quickly as possible to substance.

Others argued that the best approach was “empathetic” and suggested that the first session of class be devoted to open-ended discussion of the events. According to this view, students needed to share their feelings and experiences of that day before they dove back into their studies. Unstructured conversation would provide an opportunity for necessary catharsis.

A third approach, compellingly articulated by my colleague David Chang, was to focus on “recommitment.” This approach sought to place recent events within a framework of discussion that would allow the students (and faculty) to recommit themselves to the task of learning (and teaching) law. The aim was to engage in a collective exercise to remember why law still “mattered.” (Although it is easy to forget now, at the time a deep feeling of irrelevance attached to everything and anything not bearing directly on the attacks.)

Each of these basic approaches was adopted by some of the faculty. Whether a particular approach turned out to be successful often turned on the individual teaching style of the faculty member, but the basic benefits and drawbacks emerged in our subsequent discussions.

The “stoic” approach had the important virtue of allowing students (and faculty) to stop focusing on 9/11. Shifting to a discussion of the substantive subject matter of the class offered welcome relief from the constant preoccupation with the attacks and their aftermath. A drawback, though, was that for some number of students it was impossible to set aside the recent events and focus on seemingly remote legal issues.

The empathetic approach proved to my surprise the most risky. I was initially drawn to this approach because it promised to provide an outlet for the intense desire, nearly universally felt, to talk about the events. As it turns out, this approach probably presented the greatest problems. While it accommodated some students’ urgent need to talk about their experiences and feelings, it required other students, who were similarly experiencing intense and complex emotions, to listen. Students who spoke might have experienced the discussion as cathartic, but their auditors, a captive audience, were in danger of becoming, in the phrase of one mental health consultant, “re-traumatized” by the conversation. During a sustained period after 9/11 many of us—staff and students alike—had to expend significant psychological energy to manage our anxiety and not

allow it to become overwhelming.<sup>3</sup> Listening to others express their worries and fears made this task all the more difficult.

In my assessment, the “recommitment” approach turned out to be most effective. The aim, under this approach, was to structure a conversation so that students could incorporate recent events within the broader framework of their life experiences and long-term goals, thereby allowing them to “recommit” to the career paths they had previously chosen. We asked our students to consider whether their desire to be law students, learn about law and practice law had changed since September 11th. Pursuing this line of questions allowed students to reflect on how their earlier choices and aspirations continued to be important even after 9/11.

In my class, I posed the problem in terms of my own experience: As I sat watching rescue workers converge on Ground Zero—I told my students—I began to entertain serious doubts about my career choice. Perhaps my mother had been right all along in insisting that I should have become a doctor. Medical personnel and rescue workers were certainly what were needed now, not lawyers—or so it seemed. In response, several hands shot up, as students eagerly sought to argue to me that being a lawyer was more important than ever. One student pointed to the centrality of law in our democratic institutions, another to the importance of law in international responses, a third to the anticipated legal needs of the victims. We were right back into a discussion of the different roles of lawyers and the legal profession, and it was not difficult to create a transition from this discussion to the duty of confidentiality owed by lawyers to their clients (which is where we had left off in the syllabus).

While I used my own reactions as a pedagogic device, the discussion also helped me to recommit to professional choices I had made. As I stood before my class for the first time after 9/11, I had to struggle not to be overcome by emotion. Intense grief, which was still very near the surface, was mixed with a surge of relief that my students—some ninety of them—were sitting before me, appar-

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<sup>3</sup> I often felt that my job during this period was to try to absorb more anxiety from my students than I projected.

ently unharmed. As the discussion progressed, and students articulated the reasons why the study and practice of law continued to be relevant, I was reminded (as were the students listening in the class) of the importance of our shared work. In the early days it was difficult to see past the immediate devastation of the attacks, but the students' visions of the role of lawyers over the longer term allowed us all to feel some measure of hope for our institutions and society.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to pedagogic issues inside the classroom, we were faced with other practical dilemmas. One issue involved scheduling: Should we postpone exams until after the winter break or try to cram make-up classes into our already full schedule? As a consequence of the attacks, we had lost six class days. The Dean decided almost immediately that our students were best served if we adhered to our original exam schedule. As he emphasized, it was important to the extent possible to fulfill students' initial expectations; the winter break would provide much needed un-pressured time with family and friends; and we would be able to return for the spring semester having obtained some closure on the fall. In hindsight, the decision to adhere to our original exam schedule was the right one. While the additional required make-up classes proved something of a burden on students (and finding time and space for the sessions a logistical nightmare for our administration), we profited from a real break during the winter holidays and the opportunity to start anew in mid-January, consistent with our original pre-9/11 timetable.

A second question the faculty had to consider was whether to provide grade relief to our students, as our mental health consultants advised. After some exploration, the faculty concluded that it should be provided to all students. (Adjudicating claims for grade relief on a case-by-case basis was obviously out of the question.) Under the system we devised, every student was permitted at the end of the semester to convert one passing grade into a "pass." (We also shared an informal understanding that whatever necessary accommodations would be made for our part-time students in the uniformed services involved in

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<sup>4</sup>The recommitment process was furthered through vehicles outside the classroom as well. Over the course of the semester, we held several teach-ins to address the various domestic and international dimensions of the attacks.



relief efforts and crime investigation so that they would be able to remain in school.)

*IV. Pro bono Response*

The need to re-commit emerged as well in various initiatives that were not purely pedagogic. On September 21st, even before classes had resumed, the school hosted a meeting to coordinate pro bono responses to the legal needs created by the disaster. The meeting, convened by Professor Stephen Ellmann, was attended by numerous representatives from other law schools, public interest law organizations, law firms, and the city bar. In the subsequent weeks, New York Law School participated in various institutional and individual efforts to offer assistance. The school offered space and library access to lawyers and legal services organizations that had been displaced from their offices. It also created a clearinghouse for legal and non-legal volunteer opportunities through its Office for Public Interest and Community Service. In addition, individual faculty, students, and alumni pursued various pro bono initiatives.

We have also sought to translate these responses into more sustained pedagogic opportunities. In particular, we have added a new clinical offering this spring, “Civil Legal Services in a Time of Critical Need,” that offers students the occasion to assist in providing legal services to financially needy victims of the attacks. In addition, we have launched a project to provide corporate legal services to distressed small businesses in the neighborhood, with the possibility of turning the project into a curricular offering.<sup>5</sup> Our hope is that by integrating these various efforts into the pedagogic mission and institutional framework of the school, we can help students locate generative possibilities in the gruesome events of September 11.

*Conclusion*

Looking back some eight months later, the attacks seem almost remote. Downtown New York has taken on a semblance of normality, as has our law

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<sup>5</sup> Other projects that seek to address civil legal needs of 9/11 victims include an economic literacy project, sponsored by the school’s Justice Action Center, and an employment law project, in which a number of NYLS students are involved, initiated by the National Employment Law Project.

school, which is back full-swing in the business of writing about and teaching law. Formally, the attacks and their aftermath have been incorporated into our scholarship and curriculum. Papers presented at our weekly faculty scholarship luncheon have regularly dealt with the legal ramifications of the events. During a recent day devoted to faculty presentations, many of the talks focused on the implications of September 11th for international law, civil rights, family law, criminal law and law practice (among other areas). Changes in our syllabi and new additions to our curriculum also reflect recent events.<sup>6</sup> As is likely true for law schools around the country, 9/11 has become woven into the fabric of our work and the rituals of our institutional life.

Informally, no one talks very much anymore about the events. The immediate grief and anxiety has, for most of us, dissipated. We are relieved to be able to indulge in the unstated collective assumption that we are again safe. These are good coping strategies: We would not have been able to return to work without translating events into grist for the intellectual mill and letting go of the emotional intensity of our experiences.

But a complete recovery has its drawbacks. The horrible events of 9/11 offered a potentially transformative occasion. In a brief moment, the everyday verities of law teaching and practice were in doubt. With so many dead nearby, what we stood for and what we cared about were topics very much on the table. For us as teachers, it was not that difficult to locate and reaffirm the value in what we do. Wherever we stand on the ideological, political or methodological spectrum, we wear our commitments to legal processes, legal institutions, and the rule of law on our sleeves.

For our students, though, it is a different matter. In law school, we hope to offer them various paths and formulations to identify and begin to internalize the normative commitments reflected in law. When they enter practice, however, sustaining a view of law as a meaningful enterprise is difficult. Law practice involves great amounts of drudgery—long hours of boring and difficult work in

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<sup>6</sup> For example, in the fall my colleague Stephen Ellmann is offering a course entitled “The Constitution and Terrorism.”

the furtherance of objectives with no obvious redeeming moral worth. As observers of the legal profession have often noted, success in law practice is no longer measured by the intrinsic merit of the work but by external rewards, particularly money.<sup>7</sup> The desire to engage meaningfully in law work, through pro bono or law reform initiatives, is denigrated in the reigning practice ethos. If 9/11 opened up possibilities for revisiting normative commitments, the current conditions of law practice tend emphatically to close these possibilities off.

What can we as teachers do to counter these tendencies? There is little we can do to address directly the conditions our students meet when they enter practice, but we can try to resist in our teaching the impulse toward normalization. September 11th not only changed the legal landscape, it offered us—as lawyers, law teachers, and law students—the occasion to reshape our interior landscapes. The tragic attacks invited us to reconsider who we were, and to revisit and articulate the values that drew us to law in the first place. In teaching, our purpose should be to keep these questions alive for our students. We should aim not only to understand the legal import of September 11th, but to invite our students to continue to explore its significance for their life choices. Recommitment, in this view, is not just a helpful pedagogic device to effect a transition from a collectively traumatic event to the study of law, it is an approach that we should strive to incorporate in our teaching from here on.

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<sup>7</sup> See Deborah Rhode, *In the Interests of Justice* (2001).

## Joshua David Sanders

Class of 2003, day division

To correct the misinformed, September was the cruelest month, at least of my life.<sup>1</sup> September 11th, 2001, was the day of Daedalus, when winged creatures crashed into the earth,<sup>2</sup> and when valiant men and women, hearing the Siren's song, jumped from aluminum cliffs.<sup>3</sup> It was the best of humanity, it was the worst of humanity.<sup>4</sup> Ashes, Ashes, fell down all around everyone.<sup>5</sup> Both Richard Cory<sup>6</sup> and little Oliver Twist<sup>7</sup> suffered that day, as Charon ferried them across the river.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, here I am, the one who would prefer not to.<sup>9</sup> I would prefer not to think about the things that I saw that day. I would prefer not to think about the things that I thought that day. I would prefer not to remember. Months ago, I watched the bombs burst in midair above the towers in honor of the rebels of the 18th century.<sup>10</sup> Weeks ago, those towers burst in midair. I saw it through the red glare of tears in my eyes.<sup>11</sup> And akin to my forefathers, my very existence on this orb, spinning free through space, seems to be a testament and a memorial to the spirit of this country to rebuild.<sup>12</sup> Like the rebels of yore, I have seen my brethren bleed, cry, and die.<sup>13</sup>

No one seems to be able to tell us why.<sup>14</sup> Were the twin towers our Heorot?<sup>15</sup> Or were they reincarnations of Babel's great creation?<sup>16</sup> Was this a punishment for flying too close to Elysian fields?<sup>17</sup> Does this mean that imperialist pigs are more equal than capitalist pigs?<sup>18</sup> Whatever the reason for this last time unto the breach,<sup>19</sup> the times they have a changed.<sup>20</sup> These are the times that try everyone's souls, New Yorkers, Washingtonians, Pennsylvanians, Americans.<sup>21</sup> We have eaten pomegranate seeds. The grey and ashen have walked amongst us.<sup>22</sup>

The eyes of the world are watching now.<sup>23</sup> The lion sleeps no more.<sup>24</sup> This land is our land.<sup>25</sup> We are donning our great white suit and heading down the river.<sup>26</sup> Good begets good; evil begets evil.<sup>27</sup> However, I wonder if the baby boomers in power are planning to land white doves in the sands of Afghanistan?<sup>28</sup> Well, at least our President is sending the Afghani children dollars, instead of selling them for dollars.<sup>29</sup>

That is there, this is now.<sup>30</sup> New York is sitting under the sword of Damocles

waiting for an unknown ghost of our own society to snap the strained horse hair.<sup>31</sup> In this time since the 11th, we've all grown old, so old that we wear the legs of our trousers rolled.<sup>32</sup> We walk like pedestrians on the road to Sleepy Hollow, wondering when the horseman will come for us.<sup>33</sup> Americans, all of us scared children in this new world of terrorism, are crying "witch," praying the aldermen of the town will rescue us and keep us safe.<sup>34</sup>

We are told that America is sick and that the worm crawls within our own belly.<sup>35</sup> There is no tyger amongst us with eyes burning bright.<sup>36</sup> The question is not what is next; we know that in one word: death. What is unknown is who, where, when, and how.

Have we entered a brave new world?<sup>37</sup> I don't feel very brave, yet I am not afraid of fear.<sup>38</sup> My mind goes on walkabout more often lately. What my mind sees and what mine eyes have seen<sup>39</sup> are wholly different parts of the elephant.<sup>40</sup> I find myself reflecting on my childhood more often, a search for my own paradise now lost.<sup>41</sup> Were not the children of Afghanistan taught by "friends" of Uncle Sam to sing songs while skipping in line?<sup>42</sup>

I ascend from the underbelly of the streets to hear the bagpipes on Fifth Avenue crying for so many, too many, Danny Boys.<sup>43</sup> I look south on West Broadway and hear havoc resound and clang in mine brain. The dogs of war have been let loose.<sup>44</sup> I hear sirens and my heart drops to the bottom of the lake of Cassius, Brutus, and Judas.<sup>45</sup>

Where is Si Ling, the Heron?<sup>46</sup> What's next? For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate error so long as reason is free to combat it.<sup>47</sup> However, it is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong.<sup>48</sup> There has never been a perfect government, because men have passions; and if they did not have passions, there would be no need for government.<sup>49</sup>

So, I shall not be afraid of whoever does their bit for king or country.<sup>50</sup> Let him take his chance, if he so lead, I'll be there.<sup>51</sup> Not to follow, but to resist.<sup>52</sup> I will not go gently into that good night.<sup>53</sup> Start spreading the news.<sup>54</sup> We will rage against the dying of our freedom.<sup>55</sup> I may have preferred not to write these words<sup>56</sup> Now, hear my roar.<sup>57</sup> I sound my barbaric YAWP over the roofs of the world.<sup>58</sup> I have survived.<sup>59</sup> One life is all we have and we live it as we believe in living it, and then it is gone.<sup>60</sup>

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life since September 11, 2001—It goes on.<sup>61</sup> So we beat on . . . boats against the current.<sup>62</sup>

- 1 Elliot, T. S. *The Wasteland*
- 2 Greek Mythology: Daedalus and Icarus.
- 3 Homer. *The Odyssey*
- 4 Dickens, Charles. *Tale of Two Cities*
- 5 Ring around the Rosey, a nursery rhyme about the plague.
- 6 Robinson, Edwin Arlington. "Richard Cory"
- 7 Dickens, Charles. *Oliver Twist*.
- 8 Greek Mythology: boatsman for the river Styx.
- 9 Melville, Herman. "Bartleby the Scrivener"
- 10 July 4, 2001, Fireworks display from Liberty Island in New York Harbor
- 11 Key. Francis Scott. "Star Spangled Banner"
- 12 Grateful Dead, "Throwing Stones"
- 13 Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice*
- 14 Lennox, Annie "Why"
- 15 Anonymous. *Beowulf*
- 16 The Holy Bible, *Genesis* xi
- 17 Greek Mythology Daedalus & Icarus.
- 18 Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*
- 19 Shakespeare, William. *Henry V*. Act iii. SC.1
- 20 Dylan, Bob "The Times They Are A-Changing"
- 21 Paine, Thomas. *The Crisis (1776-1777)*
- 22 Greek mythology "Persephone." See also *The Iliad* 09.569
- 23 Gabriel, Peter "Biko"
- 24 Weiss, George David; Peretti, Hugo; and Creatore, Luigi. "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"
- 25 Guthrie, Woody. "This Land Is Your Land"
- 26 Conrad, Joseph. *The Heart of Darkness*
- 27 Chinese Proverb
- 28 Dylan, Bob. "Blowing in the Wind"
- 29 Swift, Jonathan. *A Modest Proposal*.
- 30 Hinton, SE. "That Was Then. This Is Now"
- 31 Courtier at the court of Dionysius I
- 32 Elliot, T.S. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

- 33 Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*
- 34 Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*
- 35 Blake, William “The Rose”
- 36 Blake, William. Songs of Innocence and Experience.
- 37 Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*
- 38 Roosevelt, Franklin D. “The only thing to fear is fear itself.”
- 39 Howe, Julia Ward.. Battle Hymn of the Republic
- 40 Anecdote relating to the perceptions of three blind men and their first encounter with an elephant.
- 41 Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*
- 42 Spark, Muriel. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.
- 43 “Danny Boy” old Irish folksong.
- 44 Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*
- 45 Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XXXIV
- 46 These are both synonyms for a phoenix, a symbol of immortality, resurrection and life after death.
- 47 Jefferson, Thomas. Letter to William Roscoe. Monticello December 27, 1820.
- 48 Arouet, Francois Marie (Voltaire)
- 49 Arouet, Francois Marie (Voltaire)
- 50 Anonymous. “I’ve done my bit for King and Country”
- 51 Cokayne, Sir Aston. *The Tragedy of Ovid*. Act 4, Scene VI
- 52 Mill, John Stuart, *On Nature*
- 53 Thomas, Dylan. “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”
- 54 Sinatra, Francis, “New York, New York”
- 55 Thomas, Dylan. “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”
- 56 Melville, Herman. “Bartleby the Scrivener”
- 57 Anonymous.
- 58 Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*
- 59 Gaynor, Gloria. “I will survive”
- 60 Joan of Arc.
- 61 Frost, Robert.
- 62 Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*

## Viktoria Slutskaya

Class of 2003, evening division

For the past month I've been trying to digest everything that had happened; the hell and the pain of it all. I've watched and listened to people's thoughts and reactions about the terrorist attacks that hit America. To my amazement, some of those thoughts and reactions displayed virulent anti Americanism which in essence blamed this country for what befell it.

One person recently told me that he believes the people of Israel are happy that Americans are going through what they have for the past 50 years. His comments struck me hard because as a Jew who has friends and family in Israel, I know for a fact that the people of Israel are most sympathetic to what America is going through and stand side by side with the U.S. in the battle against terrorism.

I watch the families of all that killed and at firemen and construction workers that I see on TV and on the streets and pictures on memorials. What can you say to these people? I know that what the firefighters, rescue workers, and police saw will hunt them for the rest of their lives, as it does people who lived through wars, people who see terrorist acts in other parts of the world. I remember that my grandmother could never talk about the camps through out her live and I know the experience was vividly stamped in her memory. I know that I can barely talk about my childhood in the Eastern Europe because the pain and hate just rises up with the speed that I can't control. The pain never goes away it just subsides. For many people Holocaust began in 1939 and ended in 1945 for us it began thousands of years ago and never ended. Thus we would understand and trust me the last thing one would be is happy because "finally US understands." U.S. did not need to have this happened in order to understand, it did understand by not turning away from Israel at the moments when it needs it the most. Israel is a country the same size as N.J., surrounded by countries who want it to seize to exist and no other way to go but the sea.

When the attack initially happened I was on the phone with my father screaming because my cousin, who has two small kids worked on 69<sup>th</sup> floor of one of the towers. He survived while helping two more people two walk down the



stairs while thousands of more didn't. It was his second time around, the first was 1993. It might be wrong for me to say this considering so many people lost their loves ones but I'm happy that he is alive.

There is no excuse and explanation to what happened. You can't justify what happened no matter what. If people justify this cowardly terrorist attack then you can justify slavery, Holocaust, Apartheid, racial and ethnic discrimination. If we do that when where do we stop? I heard people saying that Islamic countries in the Middle East are against terrorism yet many of them support the terrorists in Israel and their families. They condemned the September 11 terrorist attack but yet when a suicide bomber blew himself up in Sbarros pizzeria filled with children it was never condemned and celebrations occurred. Where does this stop? The terrorism must be stopped no matter what are believes behind it. People must understand that children and civilians, are children and civilians no matter what country they live in and no matter what race, religion or any other factor they might be.

I heard people on TV and here in our law school say the terrorist attack happened because of American foreign policy and its support of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait as well as our continued bombing of Iraq. These same people conveniently forget that the Gulf War was fought because the predatory regime in Iraq invaded Kuwait. They also forget that the continued bombing of Iraq is due to Iraq's refusal to adhere to the armistice agreements it signed after the Gulf War. Should the United States simply allow Saddam Hussein to thumb his nose at the U.S. and continue building weapons of mass destruction so that he could use against other nations in the region and his own people as he did in the past?

It is absurd to believe that American support of Israel has anything to do with the WTC bombing. American foreign policy has been forcing Israel, a nation the size of New Jersey, to give up some 40% of its territory for the creation of a Palestinian State. Critics of Israel never mention the fact that Israeli Arabs and West Bank Arabs have the highest standard of living and lowest infant mortality rate anywhere in the Middle East. Israeli Arabs have full political and civil rights despite the fact that they do not serve in the Israeli Army and are hostile towards the state. Israeli Arabs are the only Arabs in the Middle East with the right to vote and openly voice their political opinions without any fear of being killed or jailed

by the Israeli army. The political freedoms enjoyed by Israeli Arabs has given them some 10 seats in the Israeli parliament.

Simply put, there is no excuse for terrorism. Even if those who bombed the WTC and Pentagon believe that American foreign policy is unfair, two wrongs don't make a right. There is no justification for killing innocent men, women and children traveling on airplanes and beginning their workday in their offices. As a child growing up in Ukraine, a virulently anti-Semitic country, I dreamed of one day emigrating to the United States, the land of my dreams where I would be free to live in peace as a Jew and pursue my dreams. This is the American I knew and have come to know. During these turbulent times, we should remember that the United States is the greatest nation in the world, a nation for which we should stand firm and fight for rather than find scapegoats and blame ourselves for the horrific predicament Middle Eastern terrorism has put us in.

## Ayman Soliman

Class of 2003, evening division

Some people label me as an Arab-American. Others label me as an African-American. But as far as I'm concerned, I'm a very proud *American*.

I was born in Egypt. As a Christian Egyptian, I belonged to a sector of the people that represented only 5% of the population. That particular sector suffered throughout their lives from persecution, hatred, harassment, or the least to say embarrassment on the hands of Moslem extremists.

While the Egyptian government advocates equal rights to all its citizens, the constitution of the land separates between Moslems and non-Moslems. The laws also treat them differently. No Non-Moslem can be a President. No more than one Non-Moslem can be a minister in the government. Egyptians have to carry national ID cards that specifically state the religion to which each person belong. Along with these set of laws, that ID card alone causes Christians to be viewed always as inferior and unequal. It causes Christian competent candidates to lose job opportunities, elder Christians to endure unusual lengthy delays for their

social security and the underprivileged Christians to stand last in the line for food stamps. In short, they are viewed as outsiders in their own country. These laws plant prejudice and hate in the hearts of the people and create a society that is ignorant and intolerant where extremists can roam around freely spreading evil thoughts. And that's exactly what takes place. Women are insulted and attacked for wearing crosses, churches are burnt, Christian children are beaten in schools for they are "infidels," trips to monasteries are attacked, priests are spit on and church goers are mass murdered. My mother's uncle was shot to death in front of his 3-year-old son for failure to pay his monthly "Ransom" to one of the Islamic extremist groups who controlled the town where he operated his clinic. (He was a doctor).

Flocks of Christian Egyptians started moving to the United States beginning in the 60s. Most did not come to the U.S. for a better opportunity or a better life, but simply to stay alive. I moved to the U.S. ten years ago and I started enjoying things that others may take for granted at times. Aside from the vast wealth of culture that America offers, I enjoy equal rights and impartial treatment that are protected by fair laws and unbiased enforcement of these laws. As a citizen of this country, I have legal rights. I can assert my right to voice my dissent. I have the right to religious freedom. I have the right to be treated with fairness. I never take all these rights for granted for simply I never had them before. In short, I have my freedom-An inherited right to all human beings.

What happened on September 11th was an attack on America's Freedom—my own Freedom! I was saddened over the death of these innocent lives and I was heartbroken over their families' sorrow as all Americans were. Yet I was concerned that people, while angry, may view me as part of their problem just because I was born in Egypt. I shed tears, as all Americans did, over the lives lost, yet I was feeling that I might not be even entitled to cry over them. I felt like an outsider, yet again, and the difference this time was only a matter of geography.

However, it did not take me that long to realize that my country-America-is different than the country I was born in. America is fair, just and righteous. It protects all people, from all backgrounds and all races. The vast majority may not know what the law exactly says or how far does it extend its protection, however we all know that we ought to do what is fair, just and right. Our strong

constitution and our just laws simply became a way of life for all of us. For when the foundation is strong, when the debates are constructive and the laws are fair, a society's morality is refined over time and the line is struck, once and for all, between what is decent and what is not. Our laws do not only ensure order in our society, but they also shape our morality.

Right after the attack, I watched all officials, politicians, TV programs and Radio stations going in great length to preach tolerance and respect to all human beings from all races. And one of the things that struck me the most is the fact that officials did not order people to abstain from attacking minorities because it is illegal. However, officials went out on the air to talk about respect and tolerance and to correct views and misconceptions.

One of the ads that particularly touched me said, "Don't teach your kids to be prejudiced, not even with jokes. Jokes teach hate." Over time we became a society that does not tolerate human suffering of all forms, and that is no weakness; that is greatness. Americans, even in the middle of it all, still know how to respect each other, protect each other, and embrace their constitution and their laws. That's exactly what makes us great. And that's why *I am* a proud American.

I study the law and I enjoy it (at least most of the time.) To me, it is more than a status or a potential lucrative career. It is the shield that protects freedom and human dignity. America will always be the beacon of freedom to the whole world. America makes mistakes at times (Slavery-Discrimination-Segregation), but we always correct our mistakes. And we may commit new mistakes again, but I know we will correct them, sooner or later. We lose the way at times, but the vision is always there. We will always be the world's lighthouse that guides through darkness and will always shine rays of hope, life, and freedom to the whole world.

Christina Spiesel

Adjunct Professor

I am a new member of the adjunct faculty of New York Law School; I teach on Mondays and Wednesdays so I was at home on Tuesday the 11th of September.

It was a little delicious to not run for the 7:46 train, to sit instead at my computer writing e-mails with my second cup of coffee. It was a gorgeous day and I was looking forward to working in my garden on breaks from preparing for Wednesday's class. The world was bright. The phone rang at 8:59 and it was my sister-in-law in Florida who just said, "go turn on your TV, something's happening in New York." I did and saw the wounded Tower One. The whole thing seemed so unreal that I grabbed my digital camera to take pictures of the television screen to assure myself that those images were really there before my eyes. I saw Tower Two hit before I moved away from the set to call my husband. Our daughter, who had just begun a new job in NYC the week before, called to say that she was alone in her office on 26th Street and afraid that we would lose phone contact. I assumed that there would be no hotel rooms, that transport would be frozen, that she would need a place. I began to run down the list of friends in New York trying to guess who was in town, who lived far enough north but not too far to get to on foot, thinking above all that I had to find safety and shelter for my daughter before all communications went down. A friend here reached friends there but in the end she didn't stay with these kind strangers. I began the search for my teaching partner, Richard Sherwin, and all of our students. As luck would have it, we had collected their non-NYLS e-mail contact information and made a list. It took me five days to get through the overloaded Brooklyn exchange to speak with Richard. It took more than a week and a half before we'd touched base with all but the one student who had only "nyls.edu" e-mail. The friend to whom I had sent e-mail as I rose to answer the phone that morning sent it back to me a week or so ago. This is how I know what time the phone call came. It was so odd to read what I wrote immediately before the world changed. It has been wonderful to see our students and our subject, visual persuasion, has given us a way to bring the world into the syllabus from time to time and to acknowledge that we have all seen things we did not want to see.

## Nadine Strossen

Professor and President, American Civil Liberties Union

*Professor Strossen has had little rest since September 11 as a shattered nation struggles to balance its cherished civil liberties with a new concern for homeland security. In December 2001 and February 2002 she spoke with In Brief, from which these remarks are excerpted.*

*You testified recently before Congress on anti-terrorism legislation. What were your main concerns?*

Number one, the secret so-called “detention”—or incarceration—of around 1,200 individuals who are allegedly being charged with various low-level immigration violations and criminal-law violations. The Justice Department has refused to provide any information about them, so we don’t know if their legal rights are being respected, or even if they’re being treated humanely. We have learned that some have been held for a long time without being charged, that they’ve faced systematic obstacles in trying to communicate with lawyers, and that some even have been physically mistreated.

A second major area of concern had to do with 5,000 young men who have recently come to the U.S. on student or work visas, who were subject to interrogations by law enforcement officials based only on their national origin. The Justice Department sent out lists of these young men and lists of questions to ask them, including some very intrusive questions, such as their political beliefs. Some local police chiefs refused to conduct these interrogations because they saw them as improper ethnic profiling and political surveillance, and also counter-productive to law enforcement, by alienating certain immigrant and religious communities.

*How is the ACLU addressing these concerns?*

We had been trying to get information about the people who’ve been detained, through every possible non-litigious means, including meetings with the FBI Director. We finally had to bring lawsuits under open records laws and First Amendment principles. Additionally, the ACLU contacted the consulates of the

detainees' home countries, because whenever a foreign national is incarcerated in our country, our government is required to notify that person's diplomatic representatives. These strategies are beginning to bear fruit. We've finally gotten permission to make "know your rights" presentations to any interested inmates who are being held on immigration violations.

*What is the ACLU's position on the new anti-terrorism legislation?*

On any measure that's touted as "anti-terrorist," you have to look behind the label and analyze whether it actually will maximize national security, with the minimal possible intrusions on civil liberties. Some provisions of the new law do satisfy that basic test.

Unfortunately, many other provisions are the worst of both worlds: they will not make us safer against terrorism, but they will undermine rights and liberties for countless innocent individuals.

I am also concerned about the erosion of the checks and balances that are necessary to prevent any branch of government from gaining too much power. Congress passed this massive new law with minimal deliberation or debate. Worse yet, the Executive branch has unilaterally issued a series of orders and regulations that cut back on individual rights. These measures eviscerate judicial oversight in many areas. In short, we're seeing a dangerous consolidation of power in the Executive.

These measures also have been criticized from a national security perspective. For example, in light of the President's order authorizing any non-citizen to be prosecuted before secret military tribunals, many of our allies have said they wouldn't extradite suspected terrorists to the U.S.

*What should law schools and law students be doing in light of these concerns?*

We are now going through a profound national debate about many constitutional and other legal issues, which will have real resonance for the rest of our students' professional and personal lives. These issues have practical, personal impact for everyone in this country, but especially for those of us who are involved with the legal system. The first responsibility in this crisis is something that law schools and students always do in any event: to provide and obtain information and understanding. Learning the governing legal principles

and thinking about them critically, thinking about how they should apply to the current context, trying to learn lessons from the past, and attempting to influence legal and policy choices for the future. These efforts are more important now than ever, especially considering that the terrorists lashed out specifically at the values enshrined in our legal system—liberty, equality, and indeed the rule of law itself.

We need everyone who is knowledgeable about law, including law students, to provide basic information to individuals and various communities on their legal rights in our post-9/11 world. For example, certain immigrant communities or religious groups are facing at least the threat of many situations that could jeopardize their rights, from government interrogation to profiling searches at airports.

I think it would be great to have law students go into schools and conduct discussions on some of the legal issues that may affect these younger students in their daily lives. For example, since young people spend so much time online, they should know that the government now has expanded power to intercept their emails and Web surfing.

It's also very important to weigh in on the broad policy issues with elected officials. I can sincerely assure everyone who takes the time to send a letter or an email that it really does have an impact. I urge anyone who is concerned about these issues to check out the "Safe and Free" section on the ACLU's Web site [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org).

*Would you be willing to give up some freedom in order to preserve your life?*

I don't see how any rational person could answer anything but "yes." Because you can't enjoy any freedom at all if you're dead. But it's equally irrational to give up freedom without gaining protection for life or safety. Unfortunately, too many of the measures that have been adopted, or are being seriously considered, don't meaningfully enhance our safety, but they do significantly erode our liberty.



## Matthew Wilkes

Associate Dean for Public Interest and Community Service

### *In the Spirit of Service*

As we consider approaches to redevelopment of downtown Manhattan, we ought to contemplate how to keep alive the expressions of deep caring and generosity of spirit that emerged in the aftermath of the great tragedy of September 11. A possibility is to consecrate the site of the World Trade Center by creating there as a core element, along with whatever memorial and other appropriate development that emerges, a world service and volunteer center.

Such a facility can honor those who did so much in the face of extreme conditions and help to continue the spirit of active service and volunteerism that was summoned from deep levels as individuals responded to this crisis, and to one another. Inspired by both individual and organizational responses to this tragedy, the proposal is to create a center to assess, and further refine, methods for effective delivery of essential services in times of critical need.

For example, a central tenet that emerged as a guide in responding to this crisis came from the urge to create more supportive and streamlined methods to deliver assistance. The proposal now is to retain this sense of urgent humanity and to continue to develop approaches that remove unnecessary barriers, confusing dead ends, and other maze-like diversions often faced by those seeking assistance. Ideally, approaches that avoid these pitfalls will become the norm for delivering social services, and not only under extreme conditions.

Focusing on the roles played by the “helping professions,” both uniformed services and others, the center can serve as a training venue and offer opportunities for hands-on placement experience, geared to address both domestic and international rescue and relief efforts, responding to natural and any other disasters we may face.

The basic components of the proposed design include: (1) development of coordinated and humane service delivery systems; (2) career development training for the helping professions; and (3) research and study. The idea is to constitute a living memorial designed to sustain, learn from, and continually

regenerate the inspirational ways of being and acting that emerged on the part of so many who were touched by this tragedy.

This can serve to reinforce and keep alive the core values we share, with an emphasis on mindful responses based in compassion, understanding, and a recognition that, beyond responses to basic physical needs, emotional and mental health needs of victims and rescuers alike deserve attention. A complementary response to such concerns can be achieved in the physical environment through creation of a meditation garden, to benefit all who come to the site.

The generative power for this project, to be drawn and built upon, is based in the collective and continuing urge to help and to express our better selves that became so palpable and dramatically visible at this time. Like a stone dropped into a pool, the movement begun here can help to create waves of caring and goodwill, continually expanding outward and across the artificial divisions that often separate us.

Such a center, dedicated to service, can be part of a series of projects developed at the site to reflect and promote the finest aspects of community in New York, from a spirit of access and inclusiveness, to support and appreciation for creativity, expressed through the arts, education, philanthropy, and civic consciousness, demonstrating how diverse groups can prosper together, celebrating differences along with all they have in common. Developing means to recognize, reinforce, and propagate a spirit of mutual care—expressed through giving, healing, learning, and planning for better outcomes—can contribute to the ongoing recovery process, serving both as source of remembrance and of hope.

## Michael Yorio

Class of 2002, evening division

The sound of sirens always thrilled me as a kid. I would race along the sidewalk whenever a fire truck came down my block, never able to keep up. Back then, firemen used to stand on a running board at the back of the truck, holding onto a strap with one hand, and bounce up and down like they were on some

kiddy-ride. At least one fireman would always wave back to me, always, and I felt inside like I just made a new friend. How do those guys go one way to do their everyday job when everyone else runs the other. Heroism lies in routine courage.

A long time ago, Fireman Silvio entered my fourth grade class, and his boots filled up the room. His helmet with a badge just fit in the door and his open black coat crackled as he moved. What was that awful smell. Miss Collins blushed each time she looked at his smile, and I never knew she was so small. Can't his moustache catch fire? All I could see was his red truck outside the window, and I'm puzzled today why some of them are yellow. "Never pull a false alarm," he said, "people might get hurt." "And roll on the ground if your clothes catch fire," he advised, "no air will put it out." Do firemen still visit grammar schools? Childhood idols walked those halls.

I still stop and watch fire trucks go by, and silently salute routine heroes. But the siren today says the ride is not fun. Work and sweat is in that bounce and death is in that smell. Dread goes with each passing truck and I fear for Silvio's moustache. If ever I could see him again, I would tell him that his long-ago words surely saved lives, and that one boy thrills to see his red truck. If I could bring them all back again, I would, if only to wave 342 times, and say thank you for being my friend.



