

September 11, 2021
20th Anniversary Remembrance
Mayor Jason F. Cilento

Time passes, but memories should not fade.

Hearts ache, but pain will not diminish.

What had been, no longer is, and maybe never will be again.

Each of us knows where we were that Tuesday morning: the time and place and the people with us. But what we see in our mind's eye is now more than our own individual who, what, when and wheres. Our images and thoughts and feelings are now more than only our own. 9-11 is not a solitary, personal experience, unique to each person in a single way. No, for our generation, 9-11 is a collective encounter with our nation's historical destiny. From millions of citizens' recollections there has been forged a mass identity of purpose. Possibly no event in the past fifty years has so altered the way we look at ourselves and our hopes for what we ought to be.

It is my aspiration that the transformative nature of that awful day will be a lodestone of possibility moving us all toward the ideals of truth, justice and liberty that make America exceptional among all the nations.

But no single person can, or should, carry the torch of freedom by him or herself. And this, I believe, is a valuable take-away from 9-11, and a reason why

we are gathered here tonight. So that we shall not forget, and that we shall, in unison of spirit, strive to continue to make America the best land that it can be. May we never forget the almost 3,000 souls – husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, daughter and emergency service members- who perished that day from those terrible acts. For Dunellen, may we always remember Lydia Estelle Bravo, who never returned back to her home in Dunellen that day. May we always remember the countless soldiers who never returned home from the fight against terrorism that followed the days and years after 9/11. May we always honor and respect the soldiers who have returned home and ensure they have the support within our communities and our country. May we also give thanks to our local Fire, EMS and Police, many of whom who went into the aftermaths left in New York City to assist with the search and rescue efforts. In memory is power, and in memory is hope. May God bless you and may God continue to bless the United States of America.