

September 11, 2025
9/11 Memorial Speech
Mayor Jason F. Cilento

Good evening, everyone. On behalf of the Borough of Dunellen, I am humbled to join you here at Victor Crowell Park as we remember the victims of September 11, 2001, and all those who continue to carry the immense weight from that day. I want to extend my gratitude to Mayor Jack Mikolajczyk, the Middlesex Borough Council, Sherley Penrose, and the 9/11 Commemorative Committee for hosting this ceremony and inviting Dunellen to participate each year.

Tonight, we gather once again in solemn remembrance of the tragedy that befell our great nation 24 years ago. We pay tribute to the nearly 3,000 individuals whose lives were lost and remember the lives that were forever changed - survivors, first responders who answered the call, the families and friends of the departed, and all who are suffering lasting health complications from 9/11.

September 11, 2001, is a day deeply etched in our memories. Far too many innocent lives were lost, with citizens from over 90 countries among the victims, reminding us of the gravity of this tragedy and the impact it had throughout the world, our country, and right here in our own communities. For the Borough of Dunellen, we remember Lydia Bravo, a beloved Dunellen resident who was among those we lost.

No one could have imagined that what seemed like a regular Tuesday morning would go down as one of the darkest days in our nation's history. Mornings spent at home, on the road, in the office, or in the classroom quickly turned into confusion, fear, and heartbreak as an unimaginable catastrophe unfolded right before our eyes.

9/11 tested our country's resolve and resilience like no other, but in the face of disaster, we saw the American spirit on full display. Countless first responders ran towards danger without hesitation, while ordinary citizens showed extraordinary bravery; many of whom selflessly gave their lives to assist others through incredible acts of heroism. Among the responders were members of the Dunellen Rescue Squad, Dunellen Fire Department, and Dunellen Police Department, who aided victims across the Hudson River, supported coverage of local houses, responded to calls, or provided emergency support to victims and their families.

In the years that followed, countless men and women answered the call to serve in the War on Terror, carrying with them the memory of those we lost on 9/11. We are deeply grateful for their sacrifices and their unwavering commitment to protecting the country we love. Let us remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the United States of America, as well as those whose lives were forever changed by their service.

As we continue to reflect, we must also remember the sense of unity and togetherness we felt as a nation in the hours, days, and weeks that followed. During a time of immense grief, people from all walks of life came together, supported one another, and leaned on each other as we

navigated uncertain times. May we hold onto that spirit of compassion and resilience and carry it with us, each and every day.

In 2001, we made a promise that we would never forget. Here we are 24 years later, and we must continue to keep that promise to ensure that the victims and those who served in war will never be forgotten. May we always remember to be the country that came together on September 12, 2001, by honoring their legacy by living with compassion, unity, respect for our family and neighbors, open and free speech, and most importantly, through faith and strength. May God bless all those we lost, all those who were injured, the families who still grieve, our first responders, our active-duty service members, our veterans, and may God bless the United States of America.

Thank you.