

September 11, 2024
Middlesex & Dunellen 9/11 Memorial Ceremony
Mayor Jason F. Cilento

Good evening, everyone. We are gathered here on the 23rd anniversary of September 11, 2001, to reflect on one of the most pivotal dates in our nation's history and honor the memory of the nearly 3,000 individuals who lost their lives on that fateful day.

September 11, 2001, began for most like any other day. We prepared breakfast, read the paper, and got ready for work or school without any indication of the tragedy that would unfold in the coming hours. What started as a seemingly normal Tuesday morning would go down as one of the darkest days in our country's history, irreparably changing countless lives and shaking the foundation of the United States of America to its core.

More than two decades have gone by and we still feel the effects of 9/11 with the memories remaining clear in our minds. Most of us know exactly where we were when we heard the news of the attacks and vividly remember these moments when it felt as if time stood still. In the wake of

these horrible events, we came together as a nation to mourn, to remember, and to find the strength to carry on.

As we stand here today, it is important to reflect on the endurance of the human spirit. We are a nation built on resilience and in the face of tragedy, we came together like never before and found a renewed sense of compassion and strength. We saw countless acts of selflessness and bravery that truly encapsulate what it means to be an American. First responders in the immediate areas of impact rushed toward danger without a second thought and people sacrificed their own lives for others in extraordinary acts of heroism. The call of duty reached our local emergency agencies and volunteers who sprung into action including members of the Dunellen Rescue Squad, Dunellen Fire Department, and the Dunellen Police Department who either rushed to the scene in its aftermath to help aid victims across the Hudson River, supported in the coverage of local houses and responded to calls, or provided emergency support to victims and their families.

2,977 lives were lost on September 11, 2001, and the impact of that loss was felt around the world, throughout the country, and right here in our own

communities. For the Borough of Dunellen, we remember Dunellen resident Lydia Bravo who was lost on that tragic day. Her memory and the memories of each and every victim will forever live on in our hearts. We also remember the more than 6,000 others who were injured, the thousands who have since passed from illnesses in the aftermath of 9/11, and the families dealing with the grief of their loved ones who never made it home.

I would like to end my remarks with a message of hope, for that spirit of resilience lives on here in our communities and throughout the country. Even in the face of unimaginable loss, we can find the strength in ourselves and within one another to carry on and push for a brighter and more united future. Despite our differences, we must never forget that above all, we are bonded together as Americans. We must always remember the countless military men and women who have sacrificed in their efforts in the war against terror.

May God bless those who lost their lives and all those affected by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. May God bless you, our emergency service responders, our soldiers, our veterans, and the United States of America.

Thank you.