

**September 11th Memorial Program**  
**In Honor of the Sacrifices Made on September 11, 2001**  
**Richmond County Supreme Court - September 11, 2007**

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Phillip Minardo. I am the Administrative Judge of the Supreme Court of Richmond County. I'm here to welcome all of you to this solemn ceremony commemorating the events of 9/11, 2001. Would you all please remain standing at this time while the New York State Courts Ceremonial Color Guard presents the colors under the direction of Sergeant James C. Campbell, and Captain Louis Rebecchi will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Captain Louis Rebecchi:** I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Monsignor Farrell High School Band will now play our National Anthem.

**Monsignor Farrell High School Band:** Playing the National Anthem.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Please remain standing, ladies and gentlemen, while Reverend Monsignor John Paddock leads us in an invocation.

**Reverend Monsignor John Paddack:** As we begin our solemn ceremony this afternoon, let us begin in peace. Please take a minute to be at peace in quiet with the Supreme Being, however you may call him. Our world unfortunately is not in peace. Let us pray together asking God to walk with us on our journey to fill us with his peace and to let us bring that peace to other people. Let us remember the words of Sacred Scripture coming from Revelation, Chapter 7. “Then one of the elders addressed me saying, who are these robed in white and where have they come from? I said, ‘Sir, you are the one who knows.’ And then he said to me, ‘These are they who have come out of the great ordeal. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God and worship Him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne would shelter them. They will hunger no more and thirst no more. The sun will not strike them nor any scorching heat for the lamb at the center of the throne would be their Shepherd and He would guide them through springs of water of life and God would wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

My brothers and sisters, at 8:46 a.m. on September 11, 2001, a hijacked airplane crashed into one of the World Trade Center buildings. The event began a day of terror. The word terror describes the actions of the hijackers, but it also describes the emotion that was felt by most Americans. Today, six years later, we remember

the 9/11 victims and all victims of hatred and fear. We also pray to seek the perfect love that casts out such terror. With that in mind, let us pray. Heavenly Father, source of all love in life, we come to you with heavy hearts, as we remember those who tragically died in the terrorists attacks of September 11, 2001. May we especially remember the court officers who died, and be embraced by your eternal light and joy. And may the victims' families and friends be comforted by thoughts of a new day where your reign of peace would come in its fullness. Source of all peace, hear us as we bring our prayer petitions before you. Lord, we know that perfect love casts out all fear. May all of the 9/11 victims and all those who have died a violent death find comfort in the light of your rest. May the planners and the perpetrators of all terrorists acts in our world today be converted to the good news of life and love. For each one of us gathered here this afternoon may we hear, receive and respond to the challenge of peace. God of all help, help us to live and to love your revealed word to us and to enjoy your friendship for all time. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Thank you, Monsignor. I call upon Reverend Tony Bacon, Pastor of St. Phillips Baptist Church, to also lead us in prayer.

**Reverend Tony Bacon:** As we reflect on that day let us remember the peace of God that surpasses all our understanding. Eternal God, we thank you again for this

day that you have given unto us and now bless these officers, our leaders and these families who have come to share in this moment of reflection and remembering our loved ones lost on that day. Give us strength now to go forward and do all that is good and perfect in your sight. In your name we pray. Amen.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Thank you, Reverend Bacon. Please be seated ladies and gentlemen. Once again may I welcome you to Supreme Court Richmond County. I have the high honor to serve this afternoon as the Master of Ceremonies at these very solemn events commemorating the events of 9/11, particularly the losses which all of us were touched by and in particular the losses that were suffered by the members of the New York City Fire Department, The New York City Police Department, the Port Authority and of course the three court officers who gave their lives on that day as well all of the civilians, every one of them tragically losing their lives in the most horrific event known to us in our lifetime. We are here of course not only to remember those brave people who have lost their lives, but also to further strengthen the resolve of the American people, because we are a nation that understands that we must go forward and we must continue to do the work that we were put here to do. So we take these few moments to remember those and acknowledge those who lost their lives and also to remember that we have a responsibility as well to continue the good work that is intended so that their loss of

life will not be in vain. At this time I have the pleasure of introducing some of the members of the judiciary and the elected public officials as well as other dignitaries who have graced us with their presence today. I would start with the members of the judiciary who are here today. I would ask if they would just stand. I have them in no particular order and the seating arrangement has become such that it may be a little bit out of place but nevertheless... I would also ask to hold your applause until I have introduced everyone.

First we have the Honorable John A. Fusco, Surrogate Richmond County; the Honorable Leonard Rienzi, Administrative Judge, Supreme Court Criminal Term, Richmond County; the Honorable Thomas Aliotta, the Honorable Robert Collini, the Honorable Anthony Geacoby, the Honorable Robert Gigante, the Honorable Joseph Maltese, the Honorable Judith McMahon, the Honorable Barbara Panepinto, the Honorable Steven Rooney, the Honorable Debra Silva, the Honorable Catherine D. Dominico, the Honorable Terrence MacElrath. Thank you.

Our elected public officials who have come to join us on this day: Senator Diane Savino, Assemblymember Matthew Titone, Councilmember Michael McMahon, Councilmember Vincent Ignizio, our Commissioner of Jurors and County Clerk Stephen Fiala; representatives from the District Attorney's Office, Richmond County—District Attorney Donovan is attending another ceremony off the island

and we have the pleasure of having Chief Assistant District Attorney Daniel Master and Chief of Administrative Assistant District Attorney Tim Koller. Also present with us today is Chief Thomas Haring, New York City Fire Department Borough Chief of Richmond County and Brooklyn South, and of course we have Inspector Richard Bruno, Commanding Officer 120 Precinct. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of John P. Connors, President of the Richmond County Bar Association and also Dennis Quirk, President New York State Court Officers Association; Robert Olivari, Forbes Irvine, Deputy Chief Clerks of the Supreme Court Richmond County, both of whom did an outstanding job in assisting Greg Murray from the Office of Court Administration in preparing this day. Obviously, we had set up so that we could have the ceremony between the Supreme Court building and Borough Hall. Of course, that would have provided a great venue because from that very spot we could look across the New York harbor and see the place where the twin towers once stood, and many of us in Richmond County Supreme Court, those who were in St. George that day had a terrible experience of actually visualizing the destruction of those towers, particularly that second plane when it struck those towers. So there is a great connection between Staten Island and the events that occurred on that day. I would also like to acknowledge Commissioner Thomas Paulo from the Parks Department who did such great work. We decided that the ceremony should be held indoors, and I think we made the

right decision because at 1:00 o'clock the heavens opened up and it started to rain. That's probably some indication of some heavenly blessing upon this day for all of those who have lost their lives and those family members who continue to suffer from the loss of life, and may be a little blessing on our decision as well.

I would like now to present to you Jewel Williams, Chief of the Department of Public Safety for the Office of Court Administration.

**Chief of the Department of Public Safety Jewel Williams:** Good afternoon everyone, honored guests. Today they asked me to speak on behalf of our fallen comrades Captain William Harry Thompson, Sergeant Mitchel Wallace and Sergeant Thomas Jurgens, and it is an honor and a privilege to speak to you, to those of you who did not know those officers and just give you a brief intro into who they were. Captain William Harry Thompson had worked in the courts for over 25 years, he was at the academy at the time that he passed. He epitomized what a court officer should be, and he taught the young recruits coming into the academy and today we have the Captain William Harry Thompson Leadership Award that we present at every graduation ceremony. We have Sergeant Thomas Jurgens, who was the best patrol officer we had around 111 Centre Street. Everyone recognized him. He was enthusiastic about his job, and so was Mitch. It

is hard to try and bring them into focus for those of you who never met them and did not have the opportunity to interact with them. It would take more time than we have today, but we do have the family members here, and I ask them to stand at this particular time so we can acknowledge their presence and remember our fallen comrades.

Special thank you to the family members because there are a lot of activities going on today and they try and make as many as they can, but they always, always keep their court family as their priority, so special thank you to them and a special thank you to all of you who have shown up today to remember the three officers who were beyond brave.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Thank you, Chief Williams. Now we will hear from Monsignor Farrell High School Band that would honor us with a musical selection.

**Monsignor Farrell High School Band:** Musical selection.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** I would also like to welcome to this ceremony Assemblyman Michael Cusick and Assemblyman Louis DeBaco, both of whom

have joined us. Thank you.

At this time I have the high honor to introduce our next speaker, a person who has been with the court system for many years, having served most recently, before her present position, as the First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York and recently promoted when Chief Administrative Judge Jonathan Lippman went to the Appellate Division to become the presiding justice. Chief Judge Judith Kaye in her wisdom appointed Ann Pfau to succeed Jonathan Lippman in that position. Let me tell you she has done a fantastic job not only as the first deputy, but also in her capacity as the Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York. We are highly honored to have her here today, the Honorable Ann Pfau.

**Chief Administrative Judge Ann Pfau:** Thank you and good afternoon. It is truly my honor and privilege to be with you here in Richmond County for this important program of remembrance. This is our first beyond the shores where the devastation took place six years ago. In planning for today, I was asked whether after six years we should continue these programs, whether we should as others have done decide that enough years have passed and we should move on. My response is simple for today and in the years to come. While we always move forward, we will never move on, we will never stop publicly remembering the trauma and the loss. Never

stop publicly remembering and honoring our beloved heroes, our officers Tommy Jurgens, Harry Thompson and Mitch Wallace who lost their lives that day. And therefore today we come together once again to commemorate the tragic events of 9/11. I believe it is particularly important that we are remembering, marking the sacrifices and the heroism of that day here in Staten Island, a community that was so deeply affected by the attacks.

The terrorists acts of 9/11 had a devastating impact on each and every New Yorker, but Staten Island and its families were among the most affected by the tragedy. More than 250 Staten Islanders, including dozens of firefighters who were rescuing others perished on that day. Our judges and court personnel who were here were eyewitnesses to the horrific scene across the water. The disproportionate loss and suffering that this community experienced is equaled only by its courage and its unity. The community responded in force aiding and assisting rescue workers, caring for each other and under the leadership of Borough President Molinaro creating the Island's dramatic and moving 9/11 memorial. It is a simple yet beautiful design, a fitting tribute to the Island's many, many heroes. The incredible strength and harmony of purpose that was concentrated here in this place was felt throughout our entire city, state and nation and led us through the nightmare that was 9/11. On that day, and during the months that followed

firefighters and uniformed public servants ignored peril at every turn and work selflessly, tirelessly to save lives and recover victims. Many members of our court family were part of that front line, giving essential assistance to the rescue and recovery effort. And Tommy, Harry and Mitch, the very finest among us, made the ultimate sacrifice for their fellow New Yorkers, never flinching from danger but giving every ounce they had. We are so honored today that the members of their families have generously joined us here and we thank you once again for being part of our ceremony. I know there is no healing, no moving on for you. I only hope for you that our cherished memories of Mitch, Harry and Tommy and the valor and compassion that defined their lives can help soften some of the grief that you endure.

Today, and in the ceremonies we hold each year, they mark important milestones for all of us. As we pay tribute to the heroes of 9/11, those who fell and those who survived, we also draw inspiration from them. The bravery of their action is a shining light in an otherwise dark, dark, day in history. It was the singular clarity of that light that gave us the courage to rebuild, rebuild our structures, our communities, our souls.

Now, six years later, with hearts that still harbor pain, we are moving forward, forward to a future built on the love and the humanity that these men and women

personified. Our officers dedicated their lives and died for each of us, friends and strangers who were caught in the tragic moment of 9/11. We judges, court staff and uniformed officers must always remember them and follow their path, dedicating ourselves in our personal and professional lives today and in the days to come to the principles that they stood for: self-sacrifice, compassion for others, equal justice. Today, here today together, we pledge ourselves to those vital principles. We do so to honor the memory of the heroes of 9/11, to carry on their proud and courageous tradition of service indicative of continuing vitality. Our task in the days that follow is to never forget to draw on the strength and clarity of purpose of the hundreds of members of this community and our own officers. To continue the work of rebuilding and improving our city and our justice system, living our lives and doing our jobs with equal measures of courage, selflessness and fairness. I can think of no greater expression of love for our heroes, who by giving of themselves inspired us to the greater good in all we do, who remind us every day this year and every other day that our true foundation, love of justice, compassion in our work, respect for those we serve, seeks the light and is indestructible.

I want to close where I began, thanking you for the great honor of being with you, for joining me in remembering all of our heroes. For us particularly, the always, always brave Mitch Wallace, the energetic and dedicated Tommy Jurgens and the

wonderful, seasoned professional Harry Thompson. We love and honor them always. Thank you.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Thank you Judge Pfau for those poignant, very touching remarks reminding us all of what our responsibilities are and why we are here. And now Monsignor Farrell High School Band would present us with another musical selection.

**Monsignor Farrell High School Band:** Musical selection.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Monsignor you should be very proud of this band. They were absolutely wonderful. Let's give them an additional round of applause. We are about to conclude this program and of course everyone here, though I have introduced the judges and other dignitaries, every one here really is a dignitary, every one here plays an important part in ceremonies such as this. It is so important that we continue to remember, especially those who sacrificed their lives on this day. And again it would only further our resolve to go forward and to do the things that we need to do to make our country stronger and better. We are about to conclude this program with the singing of "God Bless America". Ladies and gentlemen, Joan Marie Cassantino.

**Joan Marie Cassantino:** Singing God Bless America.

**Hon. Phillip Minardo:** Thank you, Joan Marie. Ladies and gentlemen, we have now concluded our ceremonies.