



***Speech by William J. Aiello, Mayor of the City of Olean, September 11, 2020***

Time goes by quickly and memories fade. But the images of 9/11 are seared into the minds of those of us who watched the events unfold. Planes crashing into buildings, structures tumbling to the ground, clouds of smoke and dust trailing innocent people as they escaped the devastation.

If it was a nightmare, we would have woken up screaming—but it wasn't a dream. It was happening in real time and we watched history take place before our own eyes.

But many did not watch—they participated.

As television coverage of this event continued, we saw fire trucks, ambulances and police cars race to the scene. We watched firefighters, police officers and paramedics determined to save lives, sprint into the buildings.

They did what they are trained to do—serve, protect and save.

They became national heroes that day.

Unfortunately too many of those heroes never saw their loved ones again. 343 Firemen, 60 police officers, and 8 paramedics were killed on that day. Countless others have since died or are struggling with health issues caused by the attacks.

In total 2,977 people died and more than 6,000 people were injured as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

It is a day to always remember.

And it is our responsibility, to the heroes and victims of that day, to pass on the stories of their lives and their bravery.

We must never forget their sacrifice.

Speaking from the Oval Office just hours after the attacks, President George W. Bush said "America is the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining."

President Bush continued, and said, "Today, our nation saw evil -- the very worst of human nature -- and we responded with the best of America--with the daring of our rescue workers, with the caring for strangers and neighbors who came to give blood and help in any way they could."

We must let our children and their children know how our citizens responded to this act of terrorism.

When attacked, Americans were brave.

Americans moved quickly.

Americans were principled.

Americans were honorable.

And on the 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that historic day, I would like to thank Olean's first responders, and our current members of the military as well as veterans; September 11<sup>th</sup> will always remind us that because of your service, that bright beacon for freedom and opportunity that President Bush described, continues to shine on us.

On behalf of the Common Council and residents of the City of Olean please accept my appreciation and commendation for your service, your bravery and your sacrifice.

God Bless Olean and God Bless America.

