



September 11, 2001 – Forever Remembered

ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, two words were irrevocably joined together: First Responders. The brunt of the disasters borne by the nearest Police and Fire Departments and Emergency Medical Personnel at the Pentagon, in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and in lower Manhattan, where the Twin Towers lay crashed and crumbled beyond recognition. Even as fires burned and dust rose in almost impenetrable thickest ever clouds, every police and fire station and hospital in the five boroughs that are New York City sent their finest men and women towards the inferno.

And in the days that followed, teams of First Responders from across the country found their way to the scenes of devastation to assist their weary brothers and sisters in uniform. It would continue for weeks. And while focus still fell on the 9/11 sites, a stronger awareness grew to the fact that First Responders are called to duty everywhere, every day.

In Barrington, a historic event provided the site for a tribute to 9/11 and its First Responders, and to area men and women who have sacrificed life and limb for the safety of

their neighbors.

At the corner of Hough and Lincoln Streets within sight from Village Hall, there had stood a church since 1865. The Zion Evangelical Church was at the edge of the village boundaries then. In 1929, the Barrington Methodist Episcopal Church purchased the Zion Church, and it was formally dedicated as the new home of the Barrington United Methodist Church on January 25, 1931. The church had faced Lincoln Street and was subsequently turned to face Hough Street.

On October 28, 1998, a fire devastated the church and its steeple—a compass to the village center that disappeared from the skyline. In spite of their loss, the Methodist community was committed to rebuilding. The site had its constraints, and eventually, with reverence for the past, and a vision for the future, they returned close to their roots near the junction of Routes 62 and 68. And out of the ashes on Hough Street, there emerged a commitment to preserve the site as open space.

On February 11, 2002, the Village of Barrington Board authorized purchase of the property. Led by Beth Raseman and her then-fellow Barrington Trustees, plans were moving forward for a

memorial park, when Barrington/Inverness Police Officer Steve Graham died in the line of duty. Subsequent to this event, and in remembrance of September 11, 2001, it was decided that the property would serve as a public safety memorial park.

Ground was broken on April 30, 2003, for the construction of the park. The Barrington community rallied to the concept of a permanent memorial and committees formed from the public and business sectors, philanthropic and social organizations, and private citizens to undertake, on a rigorous timetable, the execution of a design that was provided by Klaus Schmectig Landscapes, and incorporating the bronze statues for the memorial, commissioned from artist John Ketner of Moline, Illinois. Memorial Park was accomplished solely through the generosity of in-kind and cash contributions from the community, epitomizing the volunteer spirit that had so impressed Alexis de Tocqueville during his 19th century journey through America. On September 11, 2003, the Barrington Memorial Park and Public Safety Memorial were formally dedicated.

Remembrance of the September 11, 2001 events draws out millions of differing emotions. Every year, in ceremonies at the three sites of impact it has become a tradition to read the names of everyone lost. The names of First Responders who have since succumbed to illness or injury of their heroism of those days have been added. In Manhattan, survivors, who may be a child just born on September 11, a parent or grandparent, a brother or sister, a good friend, all speak to their infinite loss. Sometimes they say a prayer, sometimes a few words, and on occasion recite a poem. Two years ago, one relative recited a Shel Silverstein verse from “A Light in the Attic”:

“Somebody has to go polish the stars; They’re looking a little bit dull. Somebody has to go polish the stars; For the eagles and starlings and gulls; Have all been complaining they’re tarnished and worn; They say they want new ones we cannot afford. So please get your rags and your polishing jars; Somebody has to go polish the stars.”

On Saturday, Sept. 11, at 10 a.m., you are invited to gather for a solemn ceremony to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11 at Memorial Park. That evening, the American String Quartet commemorates the 20th anniversary of 9/11 from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Barrington’s White House.