

President's Memorandum to Faculty and Staff

Office of the President
September 9, 2011

9/11 Anniversary

It has been ten years. Sadly, the reality is public tragedies too often become the touchstones of our shared experience. Perhaps, like me, you remember exactly where you were when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, when Martin Luther King was gunned down, or when the Challenger exploded.

No one anticipated the tragedies of September 11th – the hijacked commercial airline flights that crashed into the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon and into the earth near Shanksville, Penn. What began as an ordinary day changed our lives forever as we watched in horror when the twin towers collapsed, killing more than 2,600 people.

That day and the days that followed are filled with indelible memories - of firefighters rushing into the World Trade Towers while others fled from danger; of reports of passengers fighting back against hijackers on Flight 93; of sitting with loved ones and family members in front of the television watching for the latest reports. The deaths of the nearly 3,000 people who perished that day affected nearly all of us – not just as individuals, but as members of communities, including universities, which lost fellow citizens, compatriots, students, faculty and alumni. Perhaps, like me, you spent time reading their elegies and wondering what they might yet have accomplished had they lived. Unlike our most recent experiences of war – including two world wars and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam – this time the violence had come to our shores and killed thousands of innocent men, women and children.

In the aftermath, here at Ferris and on other college campuses across the country, there were candlelight vigils and an outpouring of patriotism unlike anything we had witnessed in decades. It was at this time that the American Democracy Project was created, to help channel this energy into preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our country. At Ferris we are fortunate to be a member of this project, helping to educate graduates committed to being actively involved citizens in their communities.

Over this weekend I encourage you take a few moments to think back to the events of September 11th, 2001, and to remember not only those who perished that day, but the many men and women since then who have given their lives in the fight against terrorism. It is a good time for each of us to consider how we, in our own way, can help make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

David L. Eisler, President