

**TOWN OF CLARENCE**  
**SUPERVISOR'S COLUMN FOR AUGUST 2011**  
**September 11<sup>th</sup> — Then & Now**

My family and I visited the mobile 9/11 memorial at the Erie County Fair. The experience moved me and caused me to reflect on the symmetry in my life that exists between then and now.

Early in the morning of September 11, 2001, as a Director on the Board of the Clarence Chamber of Commerce, I attended the monthly board meeting. As I emerged from the meeting and turned on my car radio, I heard about the attack. I went home to be with my wife, and, like many, we watched the events unfold on TV. We prayed for the souls of those who perished. Later, I drove to my law office where everyone was glued to the TV, and we began to learn more about Flights 11 and 175 and the World Trade Center, Flight 77 and the Pentagon, and Flight 93 and Somerset County, Pennsylvania. I thought of the judges and court staff I knew who appointed me to mediate matters and escaped before 7 World Trade Center collapsed. I wanted to do what I could to make the world a better place, like many of you.

There are a few more details that still stand out but pale in comparison to the tragic attacks. Back then, like this year, I was in an election primary. The primary was rescheduled, and those running for office stopped our efforts to reflect on 9/11. It was something to behold when all acted in a civil and patriotic manner.

Back then, one of the big emerging debates in Town was one involving Constitutional freedoms and safeguards. We were debating due process. It is somewhat strange that roughly ten years later we were debating the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

I remember attending a Town interfaith service. A plane flew overhead. Everyone looked up, because it was one of the first few planes aloft since the lifting of the 9/11 no-fly ban. It was weird hearing the plane's engines after so many days of silence. I would only experience something similar after Flight 3407 when it seemed everyone would look to the sky at passing planes. At the time, I could never foresee a further connection would be established between fellow Canisius High School alum Sean Rooney and Beverly Eckert and the Town of Clarence.

On September 16, 2001, as a NY Guard JAG Captain, I led the 209<sup>th</sup> Regiment's legal team. We prepared legal documents such as wills and powers of attorney for approximately 40 Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers out of the Niagara Falls Armory who were being mobilized in the wake of 9/11, as more fully recounted in the January 2, 2002, Clarence Bee Article entitled, "Helping the Guard, serving the state." I worked with fellow Clarence resident, U.S. Army Reserves' 7<sup>th</sup> Legal Support Organization Colonel James Schultz, who many of you know as a member of the Clarence American Legion and coordinator of the Memorial Day Parade.

September 11<sup>th</sup> is a difficult time for our country and for all who lost loved ones. I ask all of you to reflect on what happened, the loved ones who are no longer with us, the freedoms we cherish, and what you can do to make our Town, our Nation, and the world a better place.