SELLING AMERICA SHORT

A Report and an Appeal to the President, the Congress,
and the Citizens of the United States of America

Regarding the 9/11 Memorial in New York City
and the Future of Democracy in America

The Twin Towers Alliance

Why should anyone take the time to read this report? Because learning what is revealed here could move the American people beyond simply caring about what went wrong at the 9/11 Memorial to caring enough to make wrongs right.

Being able to muster our wills across all divisions when needed is what makes us a nation. Twenty-five years ago, we showed how much goodness there is to be tapped. Doing that here by deciding together to make the 9/11 Memorial a worthy final salute to the bravery and sacrifice of those we lost will bring healing to many heavy hearts.

The statements of fact that follow are irrefutable and largely unknown to the American People. There is no blame attached to this appeal. The current memorial has served a worthy purpose and anyone who contributed to it deserves credit and gratitude. But there is so much left to do to take it from passively dramatic to actively inspiring. And those whose lives were lost deserve no less. *That is the essence of never forgetting*.

The important first step is in your hands: To give the people this information and let the democratic process of collective reasoning begin. Because the World Trade Center is not finished. And when the final Silverstein tower is opened, it will not be finished. It will only be finished if and when the people come together to complete it.

In so many ways, our people have already paid for this memorial and deserve to weigh in on it now. If the following revelations of wrongs don't matter enough to take the trouble to correct, then what would? The answer has to be "not much". But, if this inquiry is widely circulated, it could result in a profound chain reaction of good outcomes. And people may find that a better World Trade Center is not only possible, but essential to a better world.

For those who wonder why this report is relevant today, we think the following pages will be an eye-opener. For those who just want to evaluate the thrust behind the proposal and need a brief overview of why we say it is a national imperative, we offer this summary:

- The World Trade Center rebuilding process did not honor either the public will or the deepest concerns of many victims' families. The evidence presented is unambiguous. The World Trade Center can never be called complete or worthy until these bedrock concerns are addressed.
- That matters all the more because September 11th was not only an attack on innocent life, but an attack on the principles of freedom and self-government.
- Those ideals should have guided the rebuilding protocols. But decisions of immense national and moral consequence were dominated by commercial pressures and political control.
- Many next of kin have strenuously objected for years to the placement of the unidentified human remains in the underground museum and were denied the survey that would have established how many believe it is a disrespectful, grossly inappropriate final resting place.
- **Even the solemn, backlit names on the bronze parapets would be 30-feet below ground as part of the museum if not for an overnight protest by victims' family and friends *for three frigid weeks* in 2006, to bring them into the light of day – while officials fought to protect their sanitized memorial plaza.**
- The American public was never fully informed of these conflicts and therefore naturally assumed that the present memorial reflected a settled consensus and the best judgment of those most closely affected. That dishonesty needs to be corrected now.
- The Sphere, the inspiring, only authentic artifact of 9/11 outside the museum was denied a place of honor on the Memorial Plaza despite broad support for its return because it is too much of a reminder of the brutality of the day for the deliberately low-key memorial.
- Although officials invited public input, the record shows that it was not given the meaningful consideration such a defining national decision required.
- For many citizens and family members, the current Memorial is too centered on absence, abstraction, and ambiguity, and does not adequately express courage, continuity, gratitude, resilience, and recovery.
- These flaws expose deep failings in the stewardship of a site of profound national significance. The National Park Service should assume operational responsibility.
- **As long as there is a possibility of correcting these flaws and making this right, a national discussion to consider the options for a worthy tribute is the duty of a grateful nation.**

Our lives begin to end the day we
become silent about things that matter.

— Dr. Martin Luther King

HAVE WE PASSED THE TEST?

On the evening of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush addressed the American people: "Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward. And freedom will be defended."

At the end of his remarks, he concluded: "The resolve of our great nation is being tested, but make no mistake. We will show the world that we will pass this test."

This report will give our elected leaders and citizens a chance, at this historic moment in time, to decide for themselves how well our nation has passed that test. And what more we can do there to ensure that the precious gift of Freedom is defended.

After the attacks, the public assumed that the wishes of the victims' families were given serious consideration and that rebuilding decisions were arrived at democratically. That's not true.

Our purpose by exposing the site's failings is not to be spoilers, but to present facts and propose a powerful solution. Evidence, background, and corroborating links will be found on our website.

Before we can ask that this sweeping proposal be taken seriously, we have to shine a light on the record of abuses in the process that fundamentally compromise the site and render the current memorial an unsuitable permanent tribute to the sacrifice and bravery of 9/11.

Over the next fourteen pages, we will weave together important testimonies that have been overlooked for far too long. **In the end, readers are bound to question why this information hasn't been widely acknowledged all along – and to demand to be given all the facts in the future.**

We will then detail a tremendously rewarding solution that would resolve all the disappointment surrounding the World Trade Center site. We appeal to the President and Congress to do your part to **move mountains of cynicism** and **pave the way for a national triumph.**

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER CAMPUS

What will be shared here is a good faith effort to follow the 25th Anniversary of the attacks on America with information that is fundamental to the welfare of our nation.

Our twenty years of advocating for new Twin Towers has been based on upholding the vital need to respect public opinion in the rebuilding process. We see no way to a national recovery without that. Our affection for the buildings could never have justified so much effort. But the Towers' unique symbolism and the bedrock principle of self-government made it truly worthwhile.

At the same time, we were very disturbed by the deep distress that officials' wrongheaded priorities caused to many 9/11 Families. And the only way that will ever be properly addressed is with a national review. **Because, as this report will establish, the American people were kept in the dark about matters they no doubt would have found unconscionable.**

The following proposal is our answer to that unacceptable reality. It is a full-fledged concept, not a plan; **an idea that suggests a way to elevate the 9/11 Memorial Plaza into something truly remarkable and befitting such incalculable loss.** If it leads to a national discussion, we will be very grateful. ***For if not now, when?*** **We must all know the answer to that is *never.***

Since we believe that the Twin Towers are an intrinsic part of the 9/11 Memorial, they are part of this proposed idea. But if that portion of the proposal does not get the popular support we think it will, then the footprints could be covered over as gardens with real fountains spraying upward, while another idea takes over – or adopts some of these ideas.

In any event, what matters above all is that the permanent Memorial reflect our country's truest measure of sorrow and reverence for the lives lost. It does not reflect that now. It could not possibly be our best tribute when it has compounded the grief of so many victim's family members. We can and must confront this and we can and must do better.

And the only way to do that is by reclaiming the Twin Towers' founding purpose as *shining beacons of goodwill*. Because, with or without them, that is what it will take to transform the 9/11 Memorial into the glorious, uncompromising tribute it was always meant to be.

We would then be equipped to master our other challenges – together – as partners, not foes by displaying the reciprocal respect that is so lacking in our interactions now. Because our country has determined enemies who are as obsessed with undermining America's foundations as the 9/11 hijackers were. ***They are dreaming of a day when they expect our way of life to suddenly topple and crumble like the Towers.***

In a 1963 *TIME Magazine* interview, Chief Architect of the World Trade Center Minoru Yamasaki said:

> *"World trade means world peace and consequently the World Trade Center buildings in New York … had a bigger purpose than just to provide room for tenants. The World Trade Center is a living symbol of man's dedication to world peace … beyond the compelling need to make this a monument to world peace, the World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness."*

That was ten years before the Towers' official opening and is quite a pedigree. There are no other commercial buildings in the world that can match it or come close. But after the devastation of 9/11, the need to make the World Trade Center a living symbol of what Americans hold dear lost out to the political and corporate priority to *just provide room for tenants*.

Officials did their best to disguise that premise, but the telltale shift over the past decade to calling the site the WTC *campus* makes the commercial bias unpleasantly clear.

The World Trade Center is not a Silicon Valley spread. A war memorial does not belong on a campus – nor does a cemetery. And neither does a vibrant celebration of life.

The guiding rebuilding principle was fear-based: fear that what we built would be hit again; fear that tenants would never return to the World Trade Center. That was a legitimate concern for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA), but not one that should have overridden all the other crucial concerns.

Architecture critic Paul Goldberger, who soon after was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his report on the early rebuilding protocols wrote in his 7/29/2002 *New Yorker* column "Up From Zero":

> "Governor Pataki, who, along with Governor James Mcreevey, of New Jersey, controls the Port Authority, is fond of using words like 'hallowed ground' when he talks about the site. But the people who report to him talk about 'obligations to leaseholders' and 'obligations to bondholders.'
>
> ***"In fact, if there was ever a piece of land that should be treated as part of the public domain, it is this one… the Governor should be pressing the Port Authority to operate with a greater sense of civic responsibility."***
>
> But it was not only the successive Governors of New York and New Jersey through their control of the Port Authority that decided what would or would

not be done at the World Trade Center. Media mogul and billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg played an oversized role.

A democratically arrived at rebuilding plan would have valued the priorities of the 9/11 Families and the American Family at least as much as the Port Authority's leaseholders and bondholders. **But for all the talk about listening to the people and respecting the victims' families, business-as-usual crowded out democratic principles at the sacred site.**

In 2002, officials made a big show of inviting public opinion through a series of "Listening to the City" forums. Thousands of citizens attended these events, but years later, when the Twin Towers Alliance (TTA) sent the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) a Freedom of Information request in 2011 to produce full documentation of the public process, **the few ramshackle boxes that were retrieved from off-site storage yielded nothing to suggest the results played any part in the end.**

One of the most memorable messages from that initiative's Public Comment Cards read:

> ***"Just as I want my wife back, people want their towers back. The main difference is the latter is possible, the former, not... That's what they want.... don't let today's fears control tomorrow's dreams."***

But that is precisely what officials did. There was no "Field of Dreams" for the Port Authority. Rather, the directors and their governors feared that if they built it no one would come. And that same timid mindset warped the Memorial as well.

The same week that the LMDC held the first "Listening to the City" gathering, the *New York Post* published the results of a poll on what New Yorkers wanted to see rise at Ground Zero. Based on a significant sampling of the five boroughs, it found that **half of New York wanted the Towers rebuilt and the other half was splintered into preferences with low single-digit suppo**rt.

But the story was buried — even in New York. **That was news that everyone had a right to know and discuss.** Instead, the fiction that the current World Trade Center is the product of a democratic process gained credibility and spread around the world.

By the end of 2002, there was strong support locally and nationally for rebuilding the Twin Towers, which included many victims' family members. Nevertheless, when the LMDC sponsored a worldwide design competition, the original WTC site plan was not included as an option – as if officials were afraid it would win. Public opinion may have been solicited, but where is the evidence that it was valued? **When elected officials override the popular will, a modicum of respect for the people requires them to explain their choices.**

The following three segments are prime examples of the official disrespect for many 9/11 Families concerns that disqualify the Memorial as a permanent tribute to the brave and innocent lives that were destroyed on September 11th:

I.

After a worldwide design competition was held in 2002, nine finalists were on public display at the Winter Garden, opposite Ground Zero. In February 2002, Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg overruled the public feedback and their own LMDC Commissioners, who preferred the twin-towered THINK Team design, and chose the Studio Daniel Libeskind plan instead.

The Libeskind site plan designated the center half of the sixteen-acre site for the Memorial. When the bottomless pools of "Reflecting Absence" won the Memorial Competition a year later, the scheme to create a sanitized plaza was official.

The battered tridents and the flags of the nations went inside the museum and the heroic Koenig Sphere was banished from the site altogether for making the brutality of the attacks too apparent.

As the planning moved forward, advisory committees that included some 9/11 family members were formed. But public relations operatives represented victims' families as if they were of one mind by elevating some as spokespeople, while marginalizing others.

During a brutal cold snap in the winter of early 2006, a 21-day overnight vigil in front of Ladder Company 10 across from the WTC was held by frustrated and heartsick families and friends to draw attention to the Memorial design team's intention, led by architect Daniel Arad, **to display the victims' names 30 feet below ground through museum windows at the bottom of the pools.**

It was spearheaded by Rosaleen Tallon, whose only sibling, Firefighter Sean Tallon, died on 9/11. She would leave her babies with family every evening and join the others who camped on the frigid sidewalk in front of "Ten House" – her brother's firehouse – until morning..

The demonstrations attracted the public's attention to the insulting plans and to the call to bring the names above ground, where they could be proudly honored in the light of day.

After a lot of resistance, officials relented and the Plaza was redesigned to feature the victims' names. If they had not, the backlit names on the brass parapets that line the Plaza would have joined the sacred remains as an exhibit in the underground museum.

Imagine the Plaza without the names. Nothing could make the agenda clearer than that.

II.

The inspiring Koenig Sphere that miraculously survived the collapsing towers sits in exile across the street from the Memorial. Michael Burke spent years leading a strong grassroots campaign to return the relic to the WTC Plaza. On September 11th, his brother, Capt. William F. Burke, Jr., ordered his men out of Tower One, but remained with a man and his paraplegic friend who were trying to escape. The three died in the collapse.

In the following excerpts from a 2012 op-ed in the New Jersey *Star Ledger* he wrote:

> "The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, destroyed the world as we knew it, but the Koenig Sphere survived.
>
> "The 25-foot sculpture, which was at the center of the fountain on the World Trade Center plaza, stood for 30 years as a symbol of world peace. In the decade since, it has been recognized as a symbol of continuity and endurance. It's not pretty, but it is beautiful. And it is much more than a symbol; it bears witness to undying courage in the face of hell on Earth...
>
> "So why... has it not come home to the Memorial Plaza? The head of the Port Authority... has strongly endorsed the idea. The public is clearly in favor of it. However, officials at the National September 11 Memorial Foundation — chaired by Bloomberg — tell us that returning the Sphere would compromise the "artistic integrity" of the memorial design.
>
> "This defies common sense and our duty at Ground Zero. Nothing could be more healing than the powerful image of the battered but indomitable Sphere reclaiming its place... Far from defiling the memorial design, returning the Sphere to the World Trade Center site would empower the memorial.
>
> **"Give the Sphere the honor that is vested in the battle remnants at Gettysburg and Normandy, or the artifacts at Auschwitz. It deserves to be the centerpiece of the memorial because it is a glorious symbol of the best of humanity triumphing over the worst.**
>
> "The pre-9/11 Sphere represented the ideal of world peace and cooperation, but the post-9/11 Sphere represents the battered, torn reality. If we preserve and honor its battered parts still holding their shape, it might bring us closer as a nation — and world — to upholding that vision.

> **"If any object in America is hallowed, this is it. Let the Sphere — and its flame — speak for itself of the destruction and the death and the sacrifice and the enduring survival of the values it represents."**

The Sphere was placed in Battery Park while the memorial was being built. An Eternal Flame was lit at a ceremony on March 11, 2002, by a retired firefighter who lost two sons – a policeman and a firefighter – on 9/11. A plaque alongside The Sphere read as follows:

> *For three decades, this sculpture stood in the plaza of the World Trade Center. Entitled The Sphere, it was conceived by artist Fritz Koenig as a symbol of world peace. It was damaged during the tragic events of September 11, 2001, but endures as an icon of hope and the indestructible spirit of this country. The Sphere was placed here on March 11, 2002 as a temporary memorial to all who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center.*
>
> *This eternal flame was ignited on September 11, 2002, in honor of all those who were lost. Their spirit and sacrifice will never be forgotten.*

In the summer of 2012, construction began to restore Battery Park's lawn. Instead of working around it, The Sphere was moved into storage for five years. **The Eternal Flame was permanently extinguished by the City of New York in April of 2012, when the gas line was shut off.**

The *Washington Post* reported that after Michael Burke addressed the PA Commissioners on June 28, 2012, the Executive Director, Patrick J. Foye, made this statement:

> "**The point that Mr. Burke made resonates with many people in New York and New Jersey and many people here at the Port Authority, especially given the fact that 84 members of the Port Authority family were killed on 9/11.** This is an artifact that survived and was affected by the horrors of 9/11, and placing it on the memorial plaza, we think, is entirely appropriate."

Since then, Michael Burke has dedicated himself to challenge the whitewashing of the history of the attacks. He posted this response to an online review that characterized the 9/11 Memorial as "a reminder of strength, resilience, and the city that never gave up." He wrote:

> "Actually, the memorial is none of that. We want to embrace those values in response to the attacks, so we say, despite what we're looking at, that the 9/11 memorial at the WTC says that. It's two immense "voids" – the architect's word; not "pools" – with

water running down the sides and out to a dark center abyss. They're not "pools," they're drains. As per the architect, they are "ever emptying voids, expressing the continuing absence in our lives caused by these deaths." **Carefully note its "absence caused by these deaths." Not caused by the attacks.** There is no recognition of the attacks and the memorial was praised by cultural critics for that… The 9/11 memorial at the WTC doesn't recognize 9/11. There's no expression of resilience or strength. In fact, the actual symbol of resilience and strength as embraced by Ground Zero workers, the Koenig Sphere, which stood between the towers and bashed and torn survived the attacks, was banned from the memorial because it would remind visitors of the attacks. T**hey wanted to impose a meaning of ambiguity upon the site, where visitors could think about the attacks "or not."** For over a decade, as the billion dollar, eight acre memorial was built, the Sphere sat down at Battery Park, forgotten and neglected, because it was a symbol of strength and resilience in face of the attacks. The memorial's message is pretty clear: life ends in death, death leaves nothing but absence, so anything that happens before that does not demand our attention."

He recently observed:

> **"Made by history, not designed by people, it holds an inherent truth that cannot be duplicated. In fact, by any responsible measure, it is the true 9/11 memorial."**

III.

The many choices that went into redeveloping the demolished site would have been much simpler to navigate with straight-forward polling of the various constituencies. The results would not have dictated a particular course – but it would have eliminated the he-said/she-said ambiguity that frustrated cooperation and allowed officials to manipulate public opinion and dictate matters that were not theirs to call.

The American people have always assumed that the victims' families were consulted about all the arrangements and that the billions of dollars of taxpayer support were funding healing measures that respected their concerns. That was not so. In the matter of the disposition of the victims' unidentified remains the official position has been particularly egregious and inflicted anguish that could have been solved by asking for the wishes of every next of kin.

We are including key excerpts from two of the many press notices the *9/11 Parents and Families of Firefighters & World Trade Center Victims* released over years of struggle – this one on 9/24/2015:

> (This letter has been sent to Pope Francis, signed by ten 9/11 Parents & Families of Firefighters & WTC Victims board members who represent the wishes of the majority of uniformed victims' families as well as many of the families of civilian victims.)
>
> **Most Holy Father**,
>
> We are ***9/11 Parents and Families of Firefighters and WTC Victims,*** who have lost our young Firefighter sons at the WTC on 9/11. We are writing to you with the ardent hope and prayer that you may help us have a voice and a choice in how and where the remains of our missing loved ones are interred at Ground Zero. We are asking for the honor of a meeting with Your Holiness while you are in NYC, to discuss our pain and grief regarding the current improper placement and storage of the unidentified human remains of our loved ones in the basement of the 9/11 museum. This has been done by 9/11 museum officials and the Office of the Mayor of NYC against the wishes of the majority of our families, many of whom are Roman Catholic. We seek that all the 1,100 families of missing victims have a voice and a choice in where the remains of their loved ones are interred at Ground Zero. If you are unable to meet with us in person, we beg the favor of meeting with your representative while you are in New York City.
>
> **The unidentified sacred remains of the missing include nearly half of the 343 Firefighters killed on 9/11.** The remains of many of our sons are among these precious

of humanity – which are currently being stored in an ignominious and unholy location – in the basement of the private, admission-charging 9/11 museum at Ground Zero...

The parents and families of these unidentified victims have no voice in this matter. ...Museum officials & the City of NY have never asked for permission from the grieving families to place human remains in the basement of the 9/11 museum...

For more than a decade, we have fought long, hard, bitter and expensive battles in courts for one reason only: To require those in charge at the 9/11 museum to do a proper survey of the families – to get their opinion and permission regarding where and how their loved ones will be interred for all eternity. NYC and 9/11 museum officials have adamantly refused to listen to our families and instead, have spent a fortune of taxpayer funds to fight our families in courts regarding this matter. Museum officials refuse to do the survey, because they know that the overwhelming majority of 9/11 families oppose this sacrilegious plan. We feel they are using our dead loved ones' remains as a tourist attraction at the 9/11 museum. There is absolutely no other reason for human remains to be stored at this location.

Our group, 9/11 Parents and Families of Firefighters and WTC Victims, has conducted our own survey of 9/11 families, and 95% of respondents do not want the human remains in this, or in any museum. Our families, be they of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim or other faiths, desire an above-ground, sacred and respectful tomb-like structure (which we were originally promised after 9/11) in which the sacred remains of heroes and victims can repose -- up in the light of day in an accessible "Tomb of the Unknowns" and without the need for visitors to pay the $24.00 admission fee to respect the dead.

... Many of us are middle aged and senior citizens, and we do not want to leave this world without a proper resting place for our beloved children and families so that posterity can pay them the respect that they so richly deserve...

The other release is dated 1/8/2022 and ably defines the ongoing fiscal and ethical issues of leaving a national monument of this significance in the operational control of a private foundation:

9/11 Parents & Families of Firefighters and World Trade Center Victims Calls on the U.S House of Representatives to Reject $10 Million H.R. 3250 Earmark

9/11 Parents & Families of Firefighters and World Trade Center Victims calls for the rejection of H.R.3250 as it is currently written and requests that it be rewritten to

instead fund a feasibility study of the National Park Service assuming operation and management of the aboveground 9/11 plaza and memorial pools. The claim of needing $10 million to support the high cost of security at Ground Zero defies reality.

The fact is that the site is already protected by two taxpayer-funded police departments, the NYPD and the Port Authority Police Department. The question is, does the memorial museum actually need $10 million to fund the private "security" guards or does it need the money to offset its out of control salaries and expenses?

For comparative purposes, the 2020 operating budget of the Yosemite National Park is only $31 million while the astronomical cost of operating the 9/11 Memorial Museum is nearly three times that amount at a whopping $80 million! One must consider the fact that Yosemite National Park is a massive 748,160 acres while the 9/11 Memorial Museum is only a mere 8 acres in size!

Yet again, the 9/11 Memorial Museum is asking federal taxpayers to prop up their bloated and unsustainable budget at Ground Zero in New York. This is the most expensive memorial museum ever built and the most expensive to operate with its highly excessive salaries and out of control spending. We are calling on the U.S House of Representatives, most notably the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands to deny the 9/11 Memorial Museum the additional taxpayers' monies it is attempting to acquire...

With the departure of Ms. Greenwald as the President and CEO of the 9/11 Memorial Museum, now is the time for the federal government to step in to make this an *actual national memorial, not a private foundation branding itself as one*. Greenwald and her predecessor, Joe Daniels, ignored many 9/11 family members on a multitude of issues, highlighting the critical need for transparency... **The National Park Service would bring desperately needed professionalism, patriotism, and fiscal and ethical controls to the site where nearly 3,000 people – including our sons and loved ones – lost their lives for our beloved country.**

The history of disrespect and distress we have revealed here is more than enough cause to merit a national referendum of conscience.

The thought of adding more anguish to what the victims' loved ones were already bearing is appalling. The American people would never have allowed it, if they had been informed. If, as

it appears, American citizens were kept in the dark to give the site a commercial advantage and prevent their intervention then our democracy was indeed mugged.

At the same time, the ongoing cost to the American Family is also enormous and has to be factored into this report. The irony and dismay of the cartoon at the beginning of the next section perfectly portrays the overriding theme of the 9/11 Memorial. Visitors who come to the Memorial Plaza are awed by the massive footprints and the cascading water disappearing into the voids – but there is nothing stirring about the message that is sent. It is the names on the brass parapets that move their hearts.

A Canadian citizen left this comment on the TTA Petition in 2006:
'*It is a moral defeat to shrink in the face of terrorist threats.* ***Nothing has rewarded the jihadists more than the ongoing sight of a world landmark wiped off the face of the earth."***

Anyone who doubts that should consider the account of the US Marshall who delivered Ramzi Yousef, the "mastermind" of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, to New York City for his 1998 trial. When the Marshal pointed to the Twin Towers looming just below the cabin window he said: ***"You see, you didn't get them." Yousef's chilling reply: "Not yet."***

Most people don't know that the 1993 explosion in the garage of Tower One was meant to cause its collapse onto Tower Two, destroying both in the middle of the workday. Yousef was rewarded eight years later. **And so are his fellow jihadists every time they look at the empty footprints.**

In October of 2001, Osama bin Laden boasted to an Al Jazeera reporter:

> **"Those awesome symbolic towers that speak of liberty, human rights, and humanity have been destroyed. They have gone up in smoke."**

He did not say that they spoke. He was gloating because he knew that they *speak in their absence*. As do the voids where the awesome, symbolic towers once stood – next to a single tower of the same height, same base – **now standing almost exactly where one Twin Tower stood alone for twenty-nine minutes. How can that possibly be called a recovery?**

Symbols are the universal language. They inevitably register everywhere when they are true.

On September 23, 2001, Robert A. M. Stern, Dean of the Yale School of Architecture from 1998 to 2016, and an important voice in New York architecture, planning, and preservation since the 1970s, said this:

> **"We must rebuild the towers. They are a symbol of our achievement as New Yorkers and as Americans and to put them back says that we cannot be defeated."**

There are many who would argue that the inverse reasoning is also true, including "Banksy", the prolific, world-famous, graffiti "man of mystery". He submitted a review of the Freedom Tower to the New York Times in 2013. When it was rejected, he posted the parody op-ed on his BetterOutThanIn website.

The mock headline of the scathing piece was, "The biggest eyesore in New York is not the graffiti, argues Banksy, it's under construction at ground zero" and the subtitle: "Shyscraper."

A few excerpts read: "The attacks of September 11th were an attack on all of us and we will live out our lives in their shadow. But it's also how we react to adversity that defines us. And the response? 104 floors of compromise?"

"Remarkably for such a tall structure One World Trade lacks any-self-confidence. How does it stand up without a spine? It looks like it never wanted to be built in the first place..."

Banksy's and others' critical assessments are not mean-spirited but simply authentic voices of the reigning *zeitgeist.* **It is not unpatriotic to question whether the site is good enough. *But it is unpatriotic to ignore a proposed solution when the answer resoundingly is, "No, it is not."***

These retrospective pages have laid the groundwork for the surprising proposal that follows. If our leaders will shelve their differences and partisan agendas long enough to endorse the ennobling, monumental task outlined ahead, then a sweeping, constructive new power will energize our country.

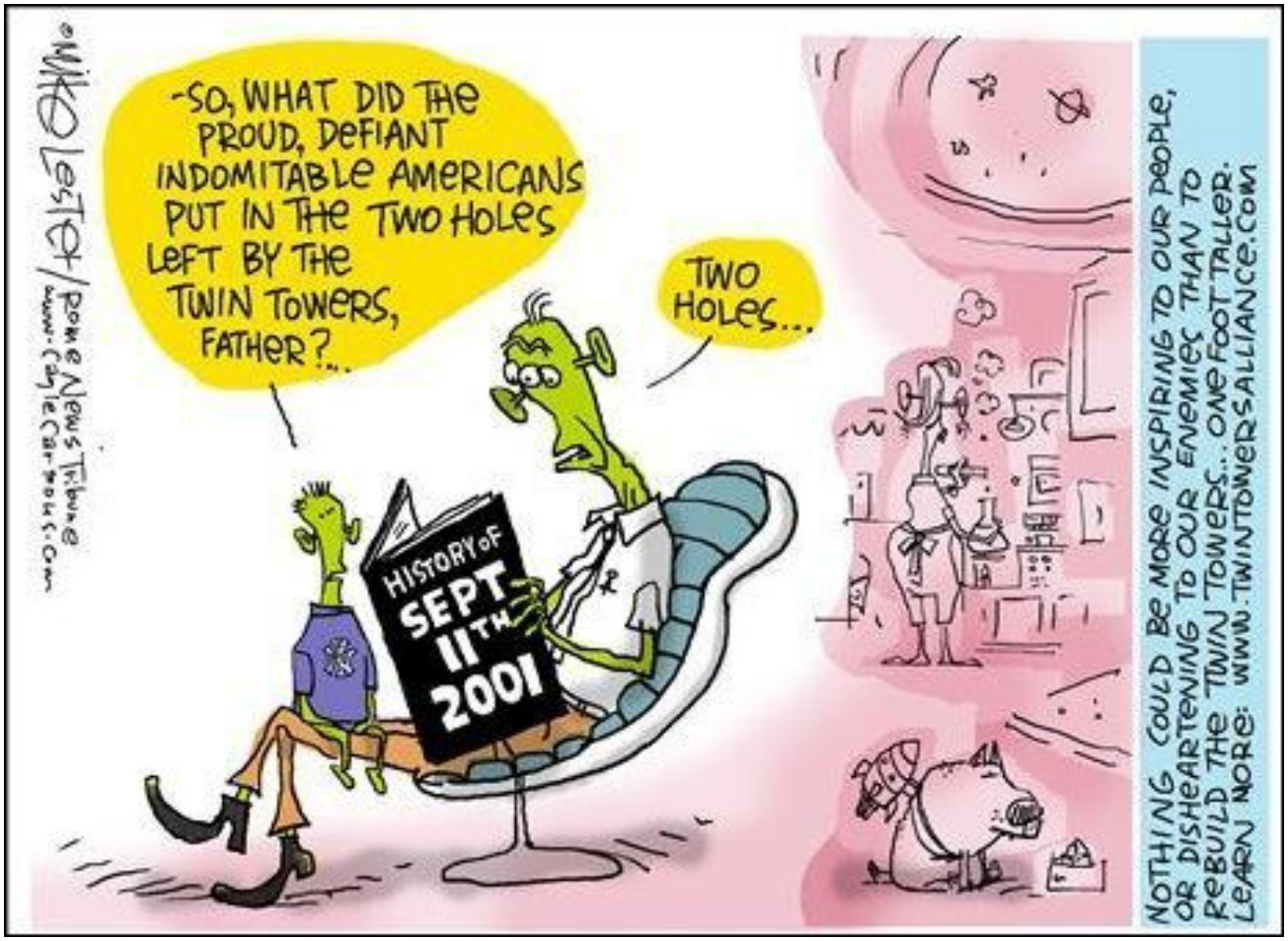
We believe that reclaiming the World Trade Center is a universal imperative. And that with an all-hands-on-deck protocol, we could make up for lost time and start an amazing reformation of our world when we start looking up again instead of down.

Shortly after the TTA Petition was launched in 2006, we spent Memorial Day visiting police stations and fire houses around Manhattan. The sun had set when we knocked on the door of the last one. The firefighter who answered the door took our folder of literature supporting new Twin Towers and we'll never forget what he told us:

"There's nothing the guys upstairs would love more..."

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost.
That is where they should be.
Now put the foundations under them.

— Henry David Thoreau



This cartoon was donated to the Twin Towers Alliance in 2006 by the illustrator.

A PLAN TO COMPLETE THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

This plan has been developed over many years. Every angle has been analyzed and researched. One of the important keys to the plan is that it would greatly enhance the elements of the site that are there today. Nothing would be removed except the dystopian Snohetta Pavilion. And, the functions of the two utility/maintenance sheds would be relocated.

Far from being a drain on a struggling city, it would be the greatest visitor draw imaginable. Even though there are already towers taller than 2000 feet in other countries, with ever taller towers sure to follow, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center would always be the most celebrated towers on Earth.

Nevertheless, we hope that all who read on will remember that the Twin Towers are in a sense peripheral to the central focus of the plan. It would be a great mistake to write-off a far better memorial if the Towers become a stumbling block.

A 9/11 Memorial that fully honors the innocent victims, the courageous responders, and the world that died on September 11, 2001, is the organizing principle of this plan.

The underlying flaw in the current site plan was making the eight acres in the center of the plaza a hybrid space. The idea that a solemn memorial could ever be part of a "campus" is bizarre. This plan celebrates the commercial and cultural activities taking place on the eastern part of the quadrant and creates a sacred place for remembrance and reverence on the western part.

THE MEMORIAL

The bronze parapets – maintaining the current "meaningful adjacencies"— would stretch along West Street, from Liberty to Fulton Streets, on either side of a central Tomb of the Unknowns, forming a solemn precinct — as it is diagrammed below.

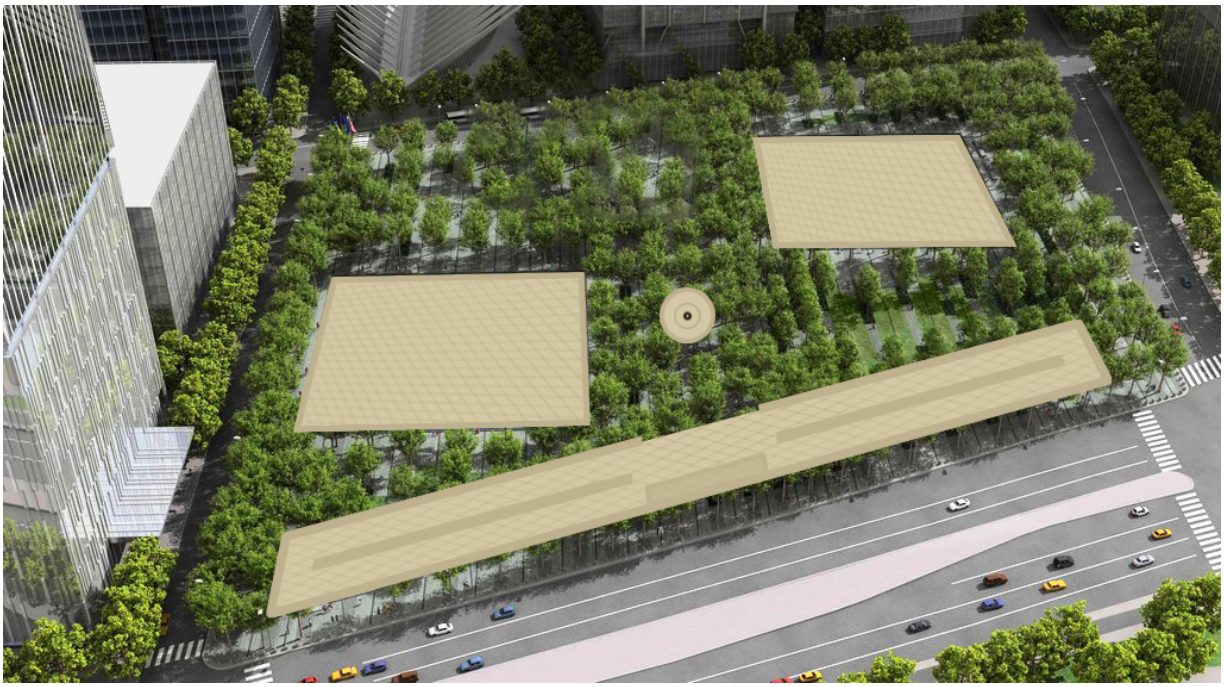
One of the Museum's tridents would stand on either side of an alabaster vault holding the unidentified remains and the 9/11 Flag would be suspended above it, encased in glass, behind an Eternal Flame.

And the position of the Koenig Sphere and fountain would, as closely as possible, reflect its original placement between the two towers but, as part of the memorial, would sit in the southwest quadrant, instead of the northeast.

The flags of every nation that lost a citizen would line the perimeter of the site and be lowered to half-staff every September 11th. And on the outside of the two walls at the entrance into the precinct would be inscribed the expanding list of names and ranks of everyone who has fallen as a result of their valorous service on 9/11 or their work to remove the infernal "Pile" of destruction.

An underground corridor between the laboratory and the vault would facilitate the Medical Examiner's ongoing work to identifying the unidentified remains.

https://twintowersalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Memorial-Diagram.jpg We hope to soon provide renderings and dimensions that will show how gracefully the proposed changes would fit into the World Trade Center landscape.



THE MUSEUM

The 9/11 Museum would be moved to the cavernous base of the Freedom Tower. That would be in keeping with the tower's obelisk shape — an international funereal element — rising at One World Trade Center.

Now standing beside the new memorial, with the unidentified remains lying in repose, the victims' names flanking the tomb on either side, the flags flying, and the Eternal Flame bearing constant witness, the symbolism becomes entirely fitting and uplifting.

The exhibits would be transferred from their underground location to a similar space behind the concrete base. The observatory, dedicated as a 9/11 Hall of Heroes, would include meeting rooms, exhibition and auditorium spaces, and a private space for victims' loved ones to look down on the dignified Memorial and find peace. And the elevator panorama would be changed to reflect a celebration of Freedom through Americans' 250 years of sacrifice since 1776.

THE PLAZA

Gearing the rebuilt WTC site to be attractive to commercial tenants came at a demoralizing price. It is not uplifting because it was not meant to be. That perverse incentive is evident in the Port Authority's marketing use of the word "campus" when referring to a site where thousands of people were savagely murdered — as if it were just another corporate spread.

With a noble 9/11 Memorial concentrated at the west end of the site and the 9/11 Museum right next to it, the sprawling ill-defined quality of the current Memorial will make way for legitimate places of celebration and recreation. Umbrellaed tables opposite the Oculus would be popular gathering places before heading into the Performing Arts complex or back to work in the WTC offices. Open-air events could include concerts, movies, seasonal pop-up shops, and even a winter rink – without being overshadowed by the attacks.

THE SPHERE

German artist Fritz Koenig was commissioned to create a sculpture dedicated to World Peace through World Trade. It sat in the center of a 90-foot-wide fountain in the plaza between the Towers that rotated once every 15 minutes.

As Michael Buke once wrote: *It's not pretty, but it is beautiful.* It was touched up by its creator Fritz Koenig before the Battery Park rededication on 3/11/02. The Port Authority wanted to commission him to restore it. But he did not believe it should be restored, as if it had not withstood the horrors of that day, but should wear its dents as a badge of honor and a warning. Noting how the relatively fragile metal globe had mostly survived the cataclysm he said:

> **"It now has a different beauty, one I could never imagine. It has its own life – different from the one I gave to it."**

As explained in the earlier section, there was great popular support for returning it to the Plaza, where it would have been an inspiring icon of the American spirit of overcoming. But it was deemed too authentic for the corporate rebuilding agenda. After years of tireless lobbying to "Save The Sphere", it was located across the street in Liberty Park. Finally home, The Sphere would stand at the entrance to the solemn memorial precinct. It would revolve on a replica of its fountain base and golden paving stones.

THE TOWERS

The Twin Towers glittered with the magic of an optimistic time when we put the first human on the moon and faced our challenges head-on. They were heroic architecture, the embodiment of a daring, confident culture. And we believe that repairing the WTC skyline would give the world a new confidence that could reverse the insidious downward spiral that has shrouded the world since 9/11/2001.

The way the Twin Towers electrified the nighttime skyline was magical. Two-thousand-foot towers rising from their footprints would soar over today's built-up Lower Manhattan skyline In the same way as the originals did and be something to behold.

They would be the first megatall towers in our hemisphere and feature two of the tallest outdoor skydecks in the world. (If standing today, they would be the tallest.)

They would be golden – as they often so often appeared in the light of the sun – **to represent their original dedication as "a monument to world peace" and the Golden Rule as humanity's North Star.** Or they could retain the original silver façade with golden tracing added to symbolize the alchemy that transforming the World Trade Center could have on the future of America and the world.

The plan envisions towers that would fill the origin al footprints – 8-feet larger on every side – which could be done without crowding the site or interfering with the infrastructure below. By tapping into the supremely confident, creative, and resolute spirit that built the originals and employing the advanced technology of today they could become a reality.

Only greater Twin Towers could ever live up to their indelible imprint and close up the hole their destruction left in our world.

THE ROOFTOPS

The 1776 beacon would flash above the Freedom Tower, while both Towers would feature open-air public spaces. If needed, additional broadcast transmission could be inserted below the Twins' rooflines. A Port Authority ad in the 1980s for the rooftop observation deck cautioned:

"And after dark, please don't touch the stars." That epitomized the Towers' allure. *And there is nothing in the city or country or world today that can come close to that appeal.*

No matter how high, an indoor observatory is definitely a consolation prize. Visitors to the original Towers will remember their disappointment when bad weather meant that a "Roof Closed" sign stretched across the Observatory escalator to the roof deck.

With two rooftops for the public to enjoy, one could be part of the restaurant and catering functions in Tower One and the other the "Top of the World" observatory and cafe in Tower Two.

The highest public open-air observation deck is currently at 1,840 ft. at the top of the Clock Tower in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. **But even if the twin decks were surpassed as the highest open-air *sky decks* on earth, they would surely continue to be the most spectacular.**

THE BELLS

The largest carillon in the world was the central feature of a very imaginative memorial that was being planned in Texas around 2008. The "World Memorial" organization, which was founded by American Airlines pilot Brus Messenger and Firefighter Mitch Mendler, reached out to Ken Gardner of "Twin Towers II" to suggest blending their ideas for a memorial with the Belton-Gardner plan.

Now, the idea of a full carillon suspended between the flagpoles along West Street, **chiming every hour, when the birthday roses are placed, when a name is added to the outer wall, and at the end of every day,** adds a dimension to the Memorial that would be lovely and moving.

> "More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses in the world."
>
> — Edna St. Vincent Millay

Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come.

— Victor Hugo

THE FUNDING

We have presented compelling reasons why the current memorial is unsuitable from both a personal and communal standpoint. And we have illustrated ways that could make the Memorial far more significant and healing. So, how do we propose to make it a reality?

A feasible *and* a transformative funding plan is the keystone of this proposal. What follows is a creative framework – not an attempt at a detailed prospectus.

The initiative begins with making the eight Memorial acres a federal district. The terrorist attacks were a national and international assault. Federalizing the site would best reflect that. Victims' families have long believed that giving the National Park Service control of the Memorial and Museum would be the most professional and respectful way to handle it. But it would not be a *taking* because no apparent legitimate interests would be converted.

From a purely economic standpoint, there is no prospect of ever generating commercial income from the Memorial grounds. So, making the eight acres a federal holding compromises no business interests.

The Port Authority is collecting ground rent payments on a 99- year lease "as compensation" for swapping "the memorial, museum and Performing Arts Center sites" for a property that the Empire State Development Corp. (ESD) and the LMDC **purchased with federal funds** after the 9/11 attacks resulted in its condemnation. And the PA also has been collecting ground rent from Silverstein Properties since 2001, **as if the Towers were still standing.**

So, in effect, the Port Authority will continue to receive payment twice for those acres. Furthermore, One World Trade Center has been fully leased for years. Therefore, releasing the Memorial Grounds from New York State's sphere of influence would be a patriotic gesture that would not adversely affect its bottom line or future prospects and for which it is entitled to no further compensation.

The insistence by the *9/11 Parents and Families of Firefighters and WTC Victims* that the 9/11 Memorial and Museum would be more properly and responsibly run by the National Parks Service are credible and compelling. **The controversy regarding the unidentified remains is the result of putting a site of historic national significance in the hands of a private foundation**. A public entity would not have felt free to ignore the need to consult with every next of kin. In any case, **the Foundation has no legitimate financial or ethical claim to the property going forward. It performed a service and should now relinquish the site to the American People.**

Neither the Port Authority nor the 9/11 Foundation would have grounds to object to upgrading the Memorial and Museum as described in this proposal. As for the tangential costs/benefits to New York City and State: Adding the Memorial Plaza and the Museum spaces in One World Trade Center to the National Parks system would propel tourism and weigh heavily in the favor of state and local governments.

Having disposed of those bureaucratic roadblocks, the central issue becomes who would pay for the development costs and who would benefit? Simply, whoever wants to participate in a remarkable triumph.

There is no way to estimate how many people around the country and world would love to be a part of making this vision a reality, but there well could be a massive response. **The history of successful public-works crowdfunding goes all the way back to the 1885 campaign to construct a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty.** Construction was halted when Governor Grover Cleveland would not appropriate city funds and Congress couldn't agree on a rescue.

"Recognizing the social and symbolic significance of the statue, publisher Joseph Pulitzer launched a five-month fundraising campaign in his newspaper *The World*. The paper solicited contributions by publishing articles that appealed to the emotions of New Yorkers. Donations of all sizes poured in, ranging from $0.15 to $250. More than 160,000 people across America gave, including businessmen, waiters, children, and politicians. The paper chronicled each donation, published letters from contributors on the front page, and kept a running tally of funds raised." (Wikipedia)

Imagine the outpouring that today's social networks could generate! It would all depend on the confidence that individuals could have in the likelihood that such a tremendous correction is really within reach. And the best way to demonstrate that would be for the President and Congress to conditionally agree to participate by *loaning* the cooperative the funding needed to launch a breathtaking around-the-clock planning and construction effort that would show that Americans are still capable of coming together to achieve astonishing things.

The promise of a government bridge-loan would only be tapped if a global pledge drive received the kind of overwhelming response that would be necessary to complete the project. And that is where the plan would kick into overdrive.

The prospect of transformed Memorial grounds and 2000-foot Twin Towers are a wonderful possibility but there is another dimension to the plan that would take the World Trade Center's original humanitarian dream to a transcendent new level.

The proposal calls for a charitable foundation named in honor of Guy F. Tozzoli – the builder and humanitarian who willed the original Twin Towers into being, as the Port Authority's

Director of World Trade. **The Tozzoli Trust would administer the funds raised, manage the Towers, and distribute the available funds in line with the goals of the foundation.**

Equity donations would only be accepted from individuals and groups of up to 100. The requisite space would be set aside as hotel rooms to provide one-day of accommodations per year for every $100 donation with no limit on how many days a donor or small group may own.

Companies, organizations, and even sovereign funds would be honored as founding benefactors for their charitable donations but would own no part of the Towers. The commercial space would be pegged to support the viability of all the World Trade Center offices and Downtown as a whole. The abundance of raw space could accommodate the ultimate vertical city.

Once maintenance and operating costs are paid, and tenants have moved into One and Two World Plaza -- or maybe Peace Plaza – **100% of the Twin Towers' net income would be available for charitable purposes. This proposal would support the following distribution:**

The first 25% of those funds would go to relieve the uncertainty that continues to plague the recipients of the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund who went far beyond the call of duty.

Another 25% would be pledged to the Tunnels to Towers Foundation for its visionary First Responders initiatives.

A third 25% would go for outreach to three generations of Americans who were deprived of schooling in the Civics that inspired and empowered all the generations of Americans before them – who haven't a clue what a remarkable, unparalleled legacy is theirs to uphold.

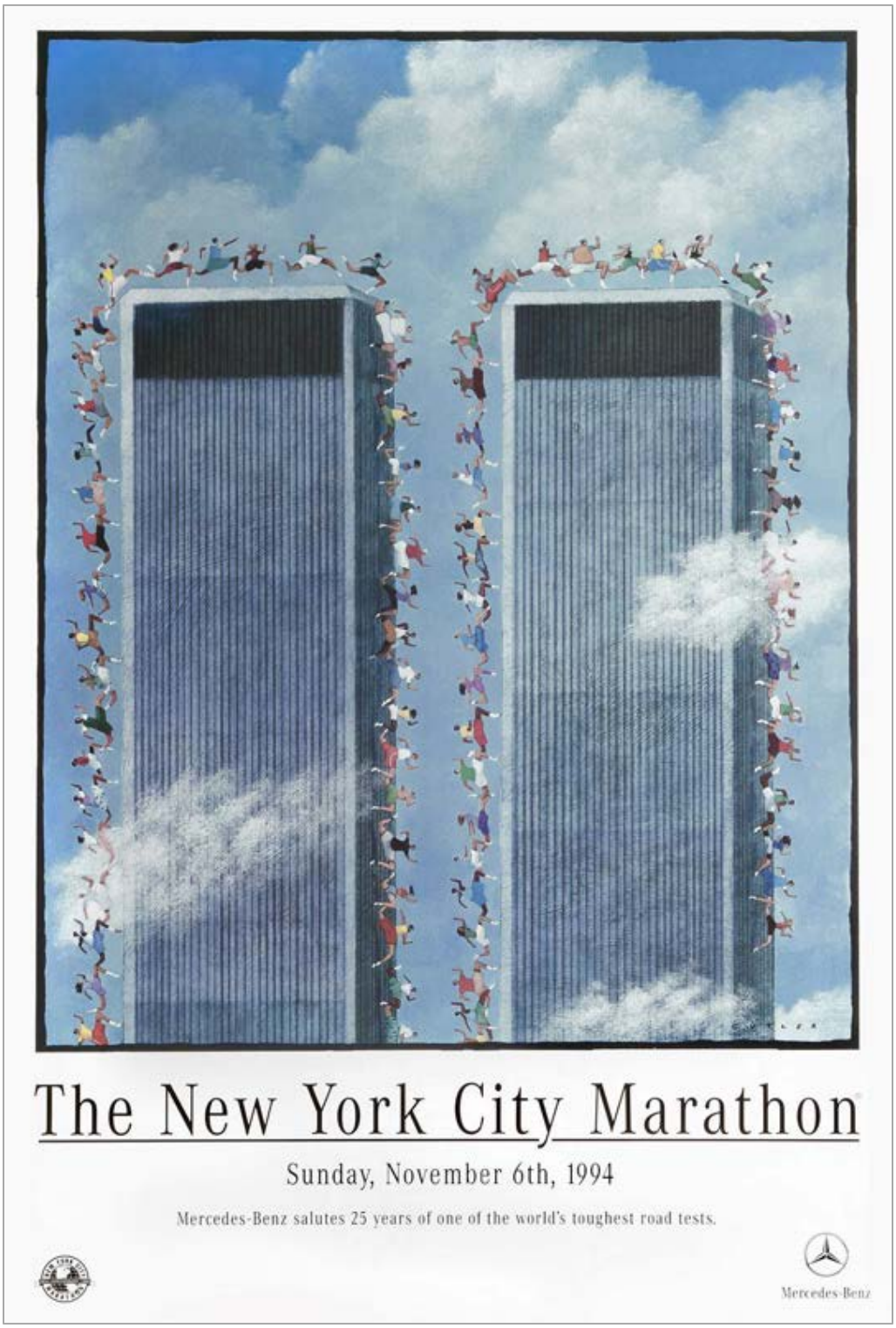
And, special backing would go those who find ways to reach young people whose natural idealism is being diverted into resentment, victimhood, and antisocial activities.

Finally, the Foundation would make significant blocks of space available for investment in promising ventures, as well as grants for worthy candidates in any field.

The grant beneficiaries would be voted on twice a year by a body of 100 founding investors (at any level) whose names would be randomly chosen until the quorum is reached. Room, board and a daily visitor's stipend would be provided on site in gratitude for their investment in the dream.

When people learn of the profound problems with the current site we predict that they will cheer for the chance to turn the abstract memorial into a true national monument – with an alabaster vault holding the precious remains, an eternal flame, flying flags, and the beloved

names in a space for solemn remembrance. And on the eastern side of the Plaza, a fabulous space, where people are living life to the fullest – laughing, playing, and looking up – maybe to imagine the smiles looking down.



The Republic is a dream.
Nothing happens unless first a dream.

— Carl Sandburg

THE PETITION

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, share the belief that nothing could be more inspiring to our people, or disheartening to our enemies, than Twin Towers, at least as tall as before in every respect, soaring above Ground Zero.

We believe that the devastation of September 11, 2001, clouded the picture long after the rubble was cleared away and that a thorough public examination of the rebuilding option is overdue and now required before proceeding on an unalterable course.

We recognize no financial or political roadblocks that cannot be overcome if rebuilding the Towers is the will of the people. And, we see no conflict between stunning Twin Towers and a noble Memorial, which belong together on this site that means so much to us all.

We submit that there is only one way to truly heal the skyline of New York and the heart of America: Rebuild the Twin Towers. Doing anything less would leave a permanent scar on the face of New York and diminish a legendary city.

The TTA Petition was launched in 2006, in the naïve belief that somehow officials had just not understood what the public wanted to see rise at the World Trade Center. Just as naïve was the expectation that the media would assist in the effort by making the petition widely known.

That never happened and even with the rising influence of social media, the presumption was that it was a lost cause. That is what makes the signatures and comments so amazing. So many were people who came across the site and then took the time to convey some very moving opinions – as if, against the odds, it mattered. And they still trickle in – just as sincere as ever. Why?

In almost 200 pages of fifty signatures each, every page has some remarkably earnest comments. We randomly chose a page or two as a sample. What particularly stands out in page after page is how much young people yearn for the idealism the Twin Towers represented – and that they feel cheated by their absence. **We think it is fair to say that each signature could represent a million like minds and hearts across America and around the world.**

We are therefore delivering this representative slice of the Petition to our nation's leaders and hope that some will be moved to browse more of the full document at the Twin Towers Alliance website.

Dreamers built the Twin Towers and dreamers are still dreaming of them. We hope that this appeal will inspire some of our officials to make a leap of faith into the realm of what is actually possible. Because Americans are at our best when we're dreaming. And, as Marcel Proust suggested:

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

George Howley 5/5/2006 **NYC Finest and Families**
I would love nothing more than to see the Towers rebuilt bigger and better as a sign to the world that the USA cannot be defeated. The rebuilt Twin Towers would be a true symbol of the power, resilience and strength of America and its people. I imagine how great it would be to look up and see the Twin Towers back in their place as symbols of American/New York strength. I could not think of a better memorial to the victims of this horrific tragedy.

George Howley
Native New Yorker, Veteran USAF
Lieutenant NYPD

Maxim Korniyuk 1/17/2021 **Citizens of Other Nations**
The Twin Towers are the symbol of New York and America for the whole world. Their restoration will be the best memorial to the endurance and firmness of the American spirit and Western civilization.

Michael Young 9/27/2010 **All Other Americans** I can't think of a better memorial to those who lost their lives or a better statement to the world that American is a nation of fighters and are builders than two brand new majestic buildings towering over the New York skyline.

John Sorrentino3/24/2009 **NYC Bravest and Families**
My father is retired FDNY. Many of our friends died that day. My aunt was on the 93rd floor. Growing up in Staten Island, I always loved the sight of the Towers when I looked at the City. Every time I pass the site where the twins were, I feel anger and rage. Those animals stole a part of my heritage. The Twin Towers were like the Grand Canyon, no picture or book could ever capture its awe-inspiring emotion. Rebuild the Twin Towers.

Abdussalam Aljoffe 4/4/2011 **Citizens of Other Nations**
New York would never be the same again without those titanic magnificent towers rebuilt again. This is the only restoration of New York image and reputation. This is the best revenge that Americans can do to humiliate terrorists and honor those who paid their lives in that site. New towers that are identical to the ones attacked would be the best memorial and best symbol of a nation that never dies.

Carrie Donnelly 8/18/2010 **All Other Americans**
This is America, do we cave and cower, or do we rebuild?
What better memorial could there possibly be?

Javier Barrio 1/19/2021 **Citizens of Other Nations**
It makes no sense whatsoever that such iconic buildings that were so central to defining New York's worldwide renowned skyline have not been rebuilt. That should have been the priority from the get-go, if the wounds and the trauma were to heal and the victims truly honored by not allowing the terror that took their lives to triumph in their objective to leave New York's identity permanently maimed with a conspicuous indelible scar. It is impossible to restore the victims' lives, and they obviously deserve the most dignified memorial so that their horrible loss and sacrifice will never be forgotten. But the Twin Towers can and should rise back from their ashes like the mythological phoenix, as the most powerful and symbolic reassertion of the American people's determination.

Stephen Leschper 11/1/2011 **All Other Americans**
We must remember that the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, were on the World Trade Center Twin Towers not the "American" Trade Center Twin Towers. These towers belong to the world. They symbolize world civilization and commerce. It was not only an attack on America, it was an attack on civilization itself. Their new One World Trade Center tower monstrosity and Memorial are monuments in fear and loss not in strength and pride. They symbolize cowering in fear and wallowing

in sadness and grief. These Twin Towers belong to us and the world. Rebuild our pride. Rebuild our strength. Rebuild our morale. Rebuild our civilization. REBUILD OUR TWIN TOWERS!

Richard McHugh 9/11/2011 **Our Armed Forces & Families**
Rebuild the Twin Towers alongside a proper memorial on the Super Block of the World Trade Center. Anything less dishonors those who died on 9/11 and those who have died defending it since and will be viewed as a sign of weakness and decline to our enemies and the world.

Wade Rhye 9/18/2010 **All Other Americans**
I have always wanted the original Twin Towers to be rebuilt; stronger and safer than before. I, and everyone I talk to about it, want to see those towers there in their rightful place once again. And of course with a fitting and prominent memorial to all those that died there on that horrible day. We will think of them and remember them every time any of us see or visit the New World Trade Center. The plans that I have seen look wonderful. I hope it's not too late.

Clyde Bailey 6/2/2010 **All Other Americans**
Please rebuild the Twin Towers. They were a symbol of America's prosperity and uniqueness. They were a symbol to the world of our status and national pride. There is no better memorial and testament to the brave souls lost there than to rebuild the towers.

Cameron Gorrie 1/10/2011 **Citizens of Other Nations**
Iconic towers, my favourite buildings in the world. Freedom tower is an insult to all those who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001. "Reflecting Absence" is an awful, impratical memorial which resembles two massive toilets. Thank God there are people like Ken Gardner out there who are dedicated to see those towers rise, that breathtaking observation deck return overlooking the best city on earth and the lights of the twin towers to brighten the spirits of the world, and to dim the lights of cowards like Osama bin Laden.

Olivier Djidjelli 9/13/2010 **Citizens of Other Nations**
France always loved the Americans; and what happened to NY and to its people affected us as much as if it had happened in Paris and to our Eiffel Tower! But there couldn't be another shape for the Eiffel tower or it wouldn't be the Eiffel tower anymore! Americans should stand up all together for the rebuilt of the exact same skyline which made the identity of NY, maybe with improved materials, but with the exact same shape! These towers are part of your patrimony and should be rebuilt as such.

Eric Casey 5/23/2025 All Other Americans Edit
National landmarks should not disappear!

Kris Malhotra 1/5/2011 **Metro New Yorkers**
I was born and raised here in New York City and I am very upset at the decision of The Port Authority and LMDC along with Governor Pataki. It was totally wrong of them to not rebuild the original Twin Towers. I feel it can still be done though. If you notice on the new WTC site, the original footprints are still there. I know they will be memorial pools, but I feel in the future they can always been built on. These are the original foundations of the Twin Towers. If the decision is made to rebuild, can they rebuild the original towers on these foundations even though they were pools?

Keith Allison 4/28/2024 **All Other Americans**
We MUST rebuild the iconic and B-E-A-Utiful Twin Towers–taller than before 9/11!! A very appropriate symbol of American Pride and civility!! That would be really truly American!!! :)

Alimkhan Galy 7/20/2025 **Citizens of Other Nations**
The current tower may rise high, but it doesn't carry the weight of meaning that the Twin Towers held. That silent strength. That brutal clarity. It's gone.
I've read about your work, and it moves me. I didn't even know such a movement existed until recently. But now that I do, I feel compelled to add my voice.
I believe we can honor the dead not just with reflection, but with the courage to restore what they were once a part of — those enormous, stubborn, unforgettable towers. I believe that would mean something to millions.
Thank you for carrying the torch all these years. You're not alone.
With all my heart, Alimkhan

Agustín Silva 9/28/2021 **Citizens of Other Nations**
The translation of his comment reads: Since I was a child, I have always been interested in the history of the Twin Towers, I always hoped that one day they would rebuild them, stronger and safer, as a symbol of resilience for the United States and the entire world. The fall of the towers meant a before and after for humanity, but I believe that the best way to heal the wound left by so much evil, would be to see them upright as they always should have been.

Alex Skorodumov 3/6/2023 **Citizens of Other Nations**
This is history

Andres Aiaste 9/5/2026 **Citizens of Other Nations**
The WTC towers were iconic and represented freedom of the west and cultural prosperity. The WTC period (1977-2001) can be considered as humane, hopeful and peaceful. The US was looked upon by other nations and it was cherished. Rebuilding the old World Trade Center complex would signal the world a positive message of the US returning to change the world into a better place once again.

Sometimes

– Sheenagh Pugh

Sometimes things don't go, after all,
from bad to worse. Some years, muscadel
faces down frost; green thrives; the crops don't fail.
Sometimes a man aims high, and all goes well.

A people sometimes will step back from war,
elect an honest man, decide they care
enough, that they can't leave some stranger poor.
Some men become what they were born for.

Sometimes our best intentions do not go
amiss; sometimes we do as we meant to.
The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow
that seemed hard frozen; may it happen for you.

America is too great for small dreams.

— President Ronald Reagan

There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America.

— President Bill Clinton

TWINS FOR A REASON

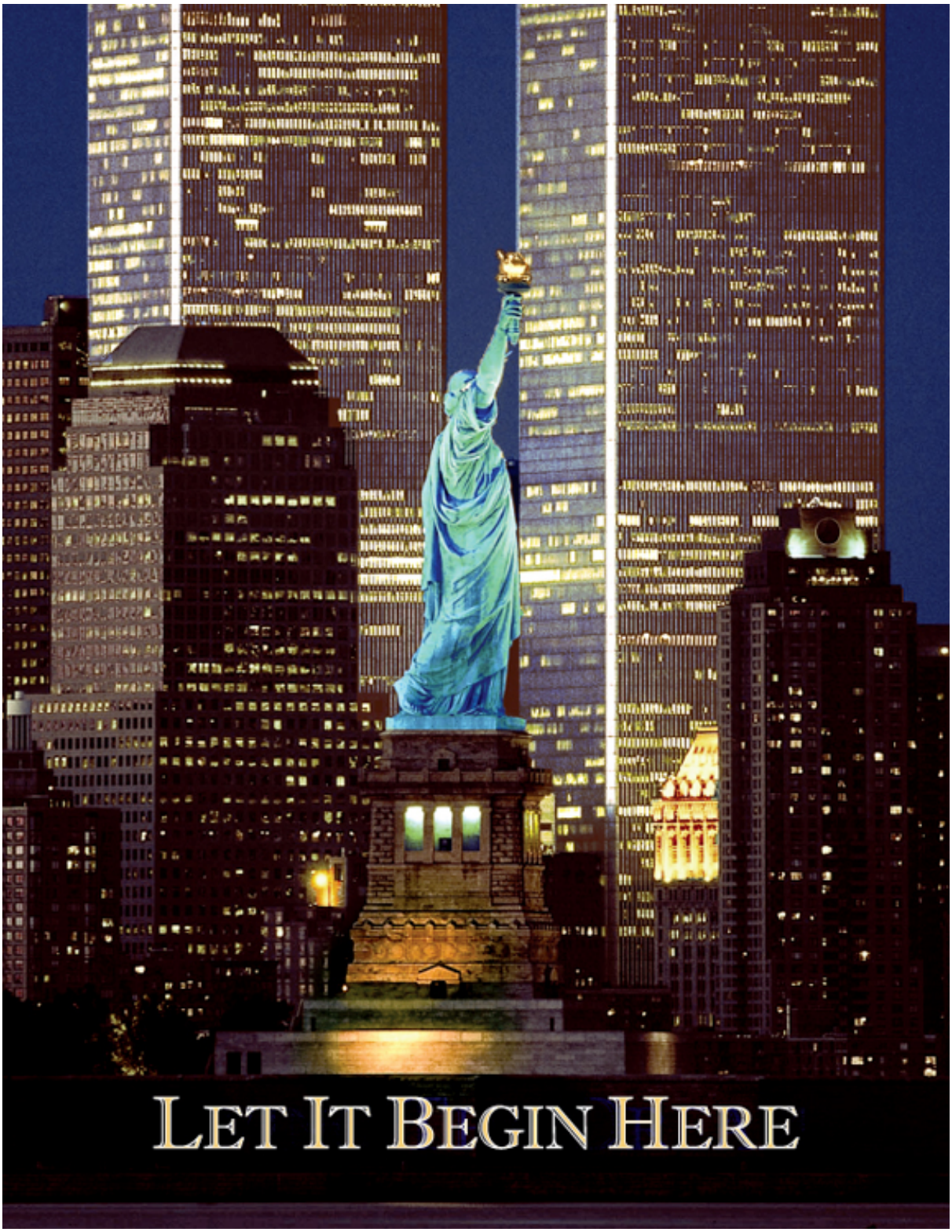
The Twin Towers were twins for a reason. They represented the spirit of peaceful cooperation without which world trade and world peace can't exist. If we are to cooperate with each other, we must treat each other as equals. You must see yourself reflected in me and I must see myself reflected in you. That was the idealism behind the World Trade Center. That is why Minoru Yamasaki designed his towers as twins. Each saw itself in the other. Just as we must see ourselves in each other if we ever hope to live in peace.

In much the same way, if the Twin Towers Alliance were a political party, what would we be for? Well, we'd be for the best of both political parties, since both parties represent important aspects of America. We'd be for self-criticism, since that has always been an important part of being American and has helped us to right various injustices in our country. But we wouldn't be afraid to be self-confident either, since that is also an important part of being an American. Without self-confidence nothing great would ever have come out of America.

We wouldn't be afraid to be different from other countries, since difference adds to the richness of the world. But we wouldn't be afraid to cooperate either, since cooperation is the prelude to peace. We wouldn't be afraid to point out what's wrong with America. But we wouldn't be afraid to point out what's right with America either. In other words, we'd try to be balanced. To be balanced, you have to have two opposite poles.

The Twin Towers represented this perfectly. They were not one monolithic building that proclaimed to the world, "We are the one and only truth!" Instead, they were two identical buildings that proclaimed the duality, the polarity, the yin and the yang of life. Perfect symbols of a great democracy. It's not your way or my way, but our way. America isn't either/or. It's both. That's why the Twin Towers represented us so well. And that's why it's so urgent that they be rebuilt, instead of allowing something that in no way represents what is best in us to rise from what has become, for most Americans, sacred ground.

We are including this piece written by co-founder Richard Hughes in 2007 because it captures what is at the heart of the Twin Towers' mystique and why they are so relevant to overcoming the dangers and realizing the aspirations of our time.


LET IT BEGIN HERE

We have it in our power to begin the world over again.

— Thomas Paine

THE WORLDWIDE COALITION TO REBUILD THE TWIN TOWERS

The surest way to a better world…

Some men see things as they are and say, 'Why?'

I dream things that never were and say, 'Why not?'

— Robert F. Kennedy

A MORE PERFECT UNION

When Americans awoke on September 12, 2001, "I" had turned to "we". An aura of intense sorrow and compassion filled the air. Those who experienced it will never forget how great it was to transcend all the hard feelings that had battered our nation's body only days – and for years – before.

Prejudices based on politics, race, religion, and class weren't wiped out – but grief made us see how unimportant all our differences really are. It was a profoundly caring and powerful time.

In the years since, our animosities have returned with a vengeance. When it comes to running our country, we don't listen to each other. We don't learn from each other. And we never encourage each other.

Does that mean that even when faults in the World Trade Center Memorial are brought to the nation's attention, it will also be mired in power struggles and bickering over who gets the credit?

Does tragedy have to be the only way to bring our divided people together? Do we have to obsess about what offends us? Or can we choose instead to go looking for our better angels?

We believe that overcoming our cross-purposes to reform the World Trade Center can become a brilliant example of how generosity of spirit produces lasting solutions instead of being defeated by petty grievances that pollute our nation. Because this is not just another country.

And the Twin Towers were never just buildings. They were symbolic pillars of the respect, achievement, and brotherhood America needs to truly succeed. Reborn Twin Towers would be a world platform for trading ideas, airing differences, building trust, and reforming a debilitated world.

Thomas Paine also said: "The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind." Will Brotherhood always be a pipe dream? Or can raising the standard of what we require from ourselves and each other be the ultimate American Dream that lights the world?

The North Star is always there to tell us where we are headed. Even on cloudy nights, judging our words and actions by the Golden Rule will keep us true.

Our aspirations set our sails to catch the wind. Where do we want to go? Do we like where we are going? Are we programmed to fail? Or can we adjust course and prosper beyond our wildest dreams?

If we want to try, it has to start somewhere. Why not in the transformation of the eight acres of Lower Manhattan, where the darkest evil brought out our beautiful hidden light for all to see?

Dirge Without Music

– Edna St. Vincent Millay

I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground.
So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind:
Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely.
Crowned with lilies and with laurel they go: but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers, into the earth with you.
Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust.
A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew,
A formula, a phrase remains – but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the love,
They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and curled
Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. But I do not approve.
More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses in the world.

Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave.
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

At the Yankee Stadium Prayer Vigil on September 23, 2001, long before the final death toll was known, Rabbi Marc Gellman put that grief into words this way:

"On that day, six thousand people did not die. On that day, one person died six thousand times."

We all believed that we would never forget, but settling for anything at the World Trade Center that is unworthy or untruthful *is forgetting.*

We must not be resigned to a World Trade Center memorial that is focused on reflecting loss instead of inspiring devotion and demanding resolve.

We must not be resigned to the disrespectful placement of the unidentified human remains in an underground museum against the wishes of their next of kin.

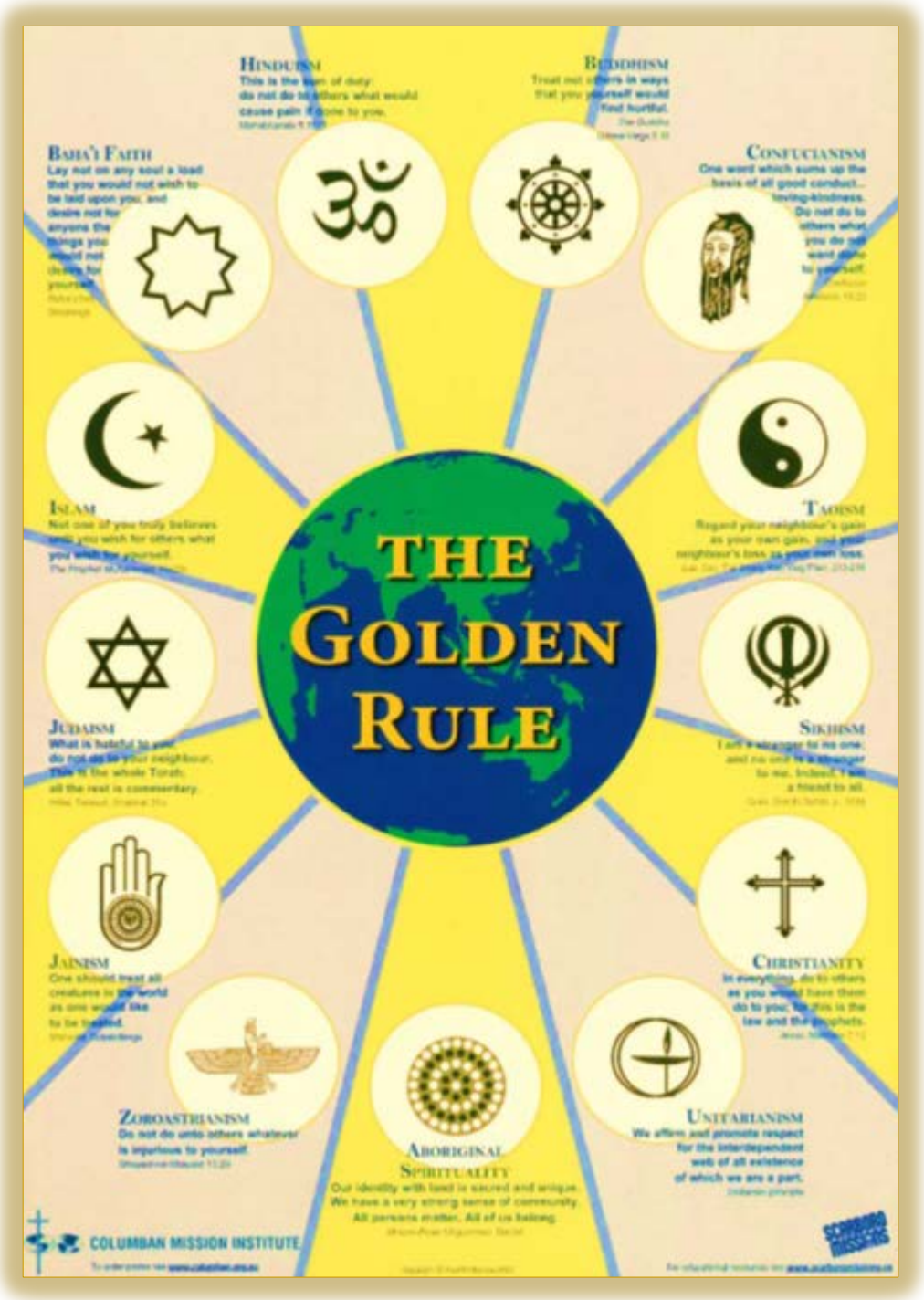
We must not be resigned to the exile of the battle-scarred Koenig Sphere from a place of honor on the Plaza where it inspired workers throughout the dark days of recovery.

We have a duty to heal the heart of America and inspire the world by dedicating eight acres as:

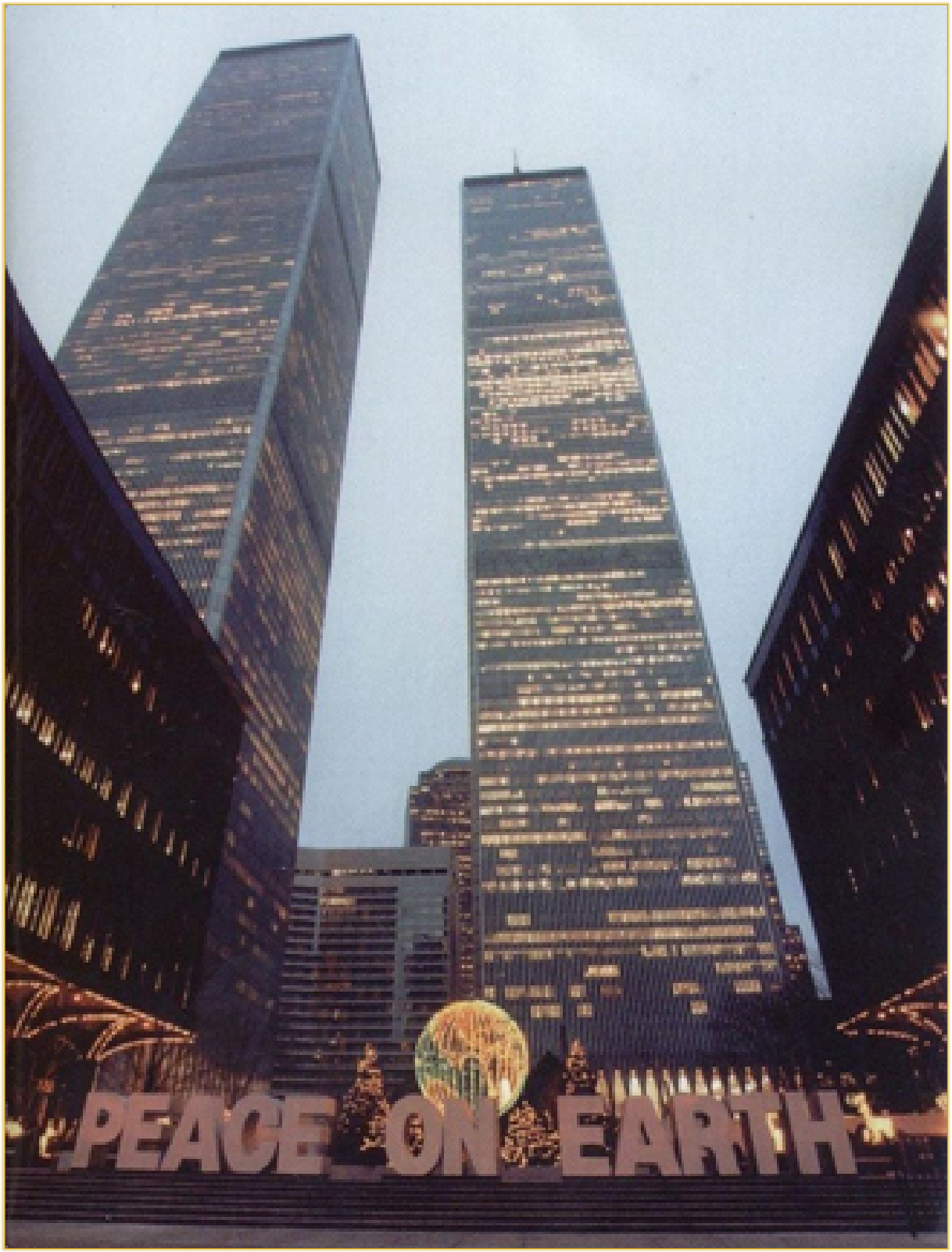
A monument to world peace.
A representation of our belief in humanity,
Our need for individual dignity,
Our belief in the cooperation of our fellow citizens,
And through cooperation, our ability to find greatness,

That would finally truly honor the sacrifice of September 11, 2001, when one, beautiful, treasured, innocent human being died 2,977 times.

Humanity's North Star



America, America! God shed his grace on thee
Now crown thy good, with Brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.


PEACE ON EARTH