

aboard United Flight 93. For without their courageous stand taken on September 11, 2001, our Capitol building and many of those serving within, perhaps some of you, may have been further victims of the terrorism that fundamentally changed our lives and our country on that dark day. With each visit to the Capitol I make time to pass through the Rotunda and view the magnificent plaque dedicated to the actions of the passengers and crew of United Flight 93. While the traumatic repercussions of September 11, 2001 have been deeply felt by each and every family member that lost a loved one that day, and by the community of Somerset County whose lives and way of life have been forever changed, I appreciate the conscious awareness of those serving in this building of the fact, that as tragic as that day was to our country, it could have been significantly worse.

As family members that lost loved ones aboard United Flight 93, we struggle continually with our loss. Our lives over the past eleven years have all taken differing paths with one common factor that will forever bind us together. Our family of Flight 93, forged in tragedy and thrust into the public domain has provided an avenue by which we can advocate for those family members that will forever remain alive in our hearts and minds. This journey has not been easy for any and more difficult for some.

For some families and individuals, withdrawal into their personal lives at home, or fresh new starts beyond the reach of the media and chaos of September 11th have been an avenue of survival. Others have joined in community with family members suffering similar loss and have found comfort with the understanding that comes from shared tragedy. And there are others that have continued to move forward masking their grief as they approach life one day at a time . . . surviving. Within our families there are others that have made a conscious decision to serve as advocates, representing the interests of the Families of Flight 93 through the Flight 93 National Memorial Partnership. No avenue of healing is proper and correct for all, just as no closure will ever be felt for those experiencing such great loss.

Our families are spread out across the globe and represent a unique diversity in culture. Yet, when we gather together each year on the anniversary of September 11th, we are one. Somerset County, Pennsylvania has become an extension of our homes and the community has welcomed us into their hearts unconditionally even as they struggle daily with the impact of events set in motion on September 11, 2001. Their lives have been impacted in ways that they are still coming to understand. Yet there is a strength and wholesomeness in the people of Somerset County that provides great comfort to our families. They proudly stand as Ambassadors working hand in hand with the National Park Service ready to tell the story of our loved ones to any and all that visit the memorial.

The Flight 93 National Memorial is more than a tribute to 40 heroes. Its existence serves our country in a far greater capacity than just as a place marker for history. Over these past 11 years we have come to realize that the Flight 93 National Memorial has a quality within similar to that of Gettysburg or Pearl Harbor. A strong sense of purpose, of loss, yet triumph permeates the entire site and only becomes more intense as visitors approach and gaze upon our Sacred Ground. The memorial was designed to honor 40 heroes, but also serves in the short term to help heal a generation of Americans deeply affected by the traumatic effects of September 11th and stands to preserve a piece of

our cultural heritage in order to educate and inspire future generations.

“Do what is right, not what is easy.” Since September 11th this mantra has guided so many within our Flight 93 National Memorial partnership and our extended Flight 93 National Memorial Family. Whether it is in the halls of Congress, Harrisburg, Somerset, or Shanksville, Pennsylvania, this project has been joined by all that appreciate the personal, political, cultural and historical impact September 11th has had on our country and freedom loving peoples around the world. On one of the bleakest days in our history, the trial of 40 individuals helped us remember that we are strong with an unquenched thirst for freedom and that no person or ideology will ever cause us to waver from a course that was set in motion by our forefathers.

In those defining 22 minutes when our loved ones experienced a horror beyond comprehension, they collectively chose to act. Not as individuals, but as a force ignited by the love of family, love of freedom and a superiority in spirit unwilling to sit back and allow an evil so incarnate to suppress their dreams and desires. They were thrust together by events not caused by individual existences, but by social, political, and religious forces that sought to break our spirit through terror. How can we not stand in awe? How can we not celebrate their spirit? How can we not honor those 40 individuals that have been woven into the fabric of our nation's proud history? The Flight 93 National Memorial will ensure that their efforts, their actions and their spirit will not be forgotten.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR D. LEIGH HASSON

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to recognize my 2012 defense legislative fellow, MAJ D. Leigh Hasson. Major Hasson served my office with distinction. From her first town hall in Fairbanks, AK, to her final days spent on the floor of the United States Senate as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 was being considered, she demonstrated honor, integrity, leadership and professionalism.

Major Hasson received her commission from the United States Air Force Officer Training School in January 2000. As a navigator with over 1,000 combat flight hours, she has deployed in support of Operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. She has experience establishing and supporting major commands including the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command headquarters and Joint Forces Command. Major Hasson has been selfless in her service and sacrifice throughout her career.

Her family has supported her through these deployments and her tenure in the Air Force. Her husband David, son Samuel and daughter Alexis have been by her side through it all. It is for them she serves our Nation—to protect what they have and to protect their future. I would like to thank David, Samuel and Alexis for their sacrifices in support of Major Hasson.

Hailing from Trapper Creek, AK, Leigh embodies Alaska values. She is independent, inquisitive, a self-starter and actively involved in her work and community. While in my office, Leigh completed the Truman National Security Project Security Scholars program. She was the office's liaison to the Alaska State Society, she taught Bible study at her church and somehow she still found the time to train and run the Army Ten-Miler in support of our troops.

As a defense legislative fellow, she contributed greatly to the State of Alaska and the Nation. She led the charge on Arctic issues because she recognized the increasing importance of the region. Due to her work, I was successful in securing report language to accompany the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 on appropriately resourcing the Arctic. She staffed me at numerous hearings and provided vital insight on a number of pressing national security issues.

As a member of my team, Leigh approached each day with a positive attitude. Despite working in an environment where one can easily become discouraged by politics, Leigh never failed to smile and press forward in the best interest of the Nation.

It has been a pleasure to host Major Hasson in my office. I wish her the best in her future endeavors and thank her for her service.●

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT M. BELL

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to recognize the Honorable Robert M. Bell, Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, for his outstanding contributions as a jurist, administrator, and justice advocate. His work on the bench has transformed the Maryland judicial system. His success in Maryland has provided leadership for national initiatives. And Chief Judge Bell has secured his place in history as a civil rights leader, both in Maryland and nationally.

Chief Judge Bell has served as the Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals and the head of Maryland's Judiciary for the past 15 years. But before Chief Judge Bell took the bench, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues in the Senate that Chief Judge Bell was already involved with our State's judicial system. As a high school student, he was a civil rights protestor who engaged in civil disobedience in Baltimore, and his case ultimately reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Maryland State Archives has used the Bell v. Maryland case as part of its series on “Teaching American History in Maryland”. According to the account by the Archives, in 1960, the majority of restaurants in downtown Baltimore were still segregated and blacks were not served at all-white dining establishments. Students from Dunbar High School and Morgan State