



Remarks by Greg Case
President and Chief Executive Officer
Aon Corporation
Memorial Service – 10th Anniversary of September 11
St. Peter's Church
New York City, September 9, 2011

Reverend clergy, Aon colleagues and family, and all who carry in your hearts the sacred memory of those we honor today.

Ten years ago this coming Sunday, our firm lost 176 friends. Over 2,800 of our citizens lost their lives that day, including nearly 400 New York firefighters, police officers, and Port Authority officers who risked their lives to save people they did not even know. But that was their job; to do their best.

For those of us here today, for our 60,000 Aon colleagues around the world, and for our nation, Sunday will be a day to remember, to reflect, and to renew.

Each of us are pained to the core by the tragedy of September 11. We know that we share this pain not only with everyone here, but with everyone in our firm and with all of the people of our great nation. What happened on that day nearly ten years ago is a national loss that will never be forgotten.

It is perfectly natural to think back to the terrible images we saw. However, our presence here today, and the traditions that have been created and carried on, serves to remind us of the fullness of the lives we honor and celebrate.

Our lost colleagues were just like the rest of us. Not only were they our friends, they were mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. They were raising families. They were pursuing their dreams. For many, they had their whole life ahead of them.

They were men and women made up of all races and faiths. We all know they were taken from us much too soon. But as we nod our heads in agreement on that fact, let us also agree that they lived well and that their spirit lives on in all of us.



To those of you from Aon who were there that day, I want you to know how proud we are as a firm of your dedication and the manner in which you have honored those who have struggled and those who have fallen. While no one can grasp the depth of your sorrow, know that we are willing to share it.

For the families of our lost colleagues, we know that many of you have shed more tears than we will ever know. And while it might seem that the world has slowly moved on to other issues and concerns, I want to assure you that the spirit of your loved ones will always live on in the heart of Aon.

And so how do we honor them on this day? Well, my friends, I think they have in fact honored us with their legacy. We recall the actions they took which inspired us and why we remember them so fondly. For some, it is the legacy of their children.

For example, it is someone like Kerene Reeves, the daughter of Carol Rabalais. Kerene completed her undergraduate work at the New York City Technical College. She joined Aon in October of 2001 and today is an associate broker for Aon Risk Solutions.

It is someone like Maureen Doherty, the daughter of John Doherty. Maureen graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in 2010 and has begun pursuing a master's degree in speech pathology at Boston University.

And it is someone like David Hemschoot, the son of Mark Hemschoot. David graduated magna cum laude from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 2007. In a letter to Aon, David wrote, "Relieving my mother of the financial burden and seeing the scholarships as a tribute to my father has made me work very hard to do my best."

"To do my best". Those four simple words truly capture the spirit of emerging from hardship.

"To do my best". It is how the first responders did their jobs on that day. It is how all of us can live our lives each and every day.



It will be ten years ago this Sunday that we saw destruction and tragedy. Yet, when we look at the world today through the eyes of Kerene, Maureen and David, and the children of our lost colleagues who have moved forward with their lives in such a positive manner, we see comfort and hope. In their actions we see the future of our great nation, and for that we bow our heads and give thanks.

This is how we – their families, their friends, their fellow workers – will continue to remember our 176 friends and colleagues. This is how we will help keep their legacy alive.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah, “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry hosts one by one and calls them each by name. Because of his great power, and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

The same Creator who names the stars also knows the names of the Aon friends and colleagues we mourn and remember today. We lost them all on September 11, yet we know that they will never be forgotten. And that their legacy, born in tragedy, can be one of hope, commitment and enduring faith.