

Thacher Proffitt Remembers 9/11

city. The city is coming back to life just as I am getting back to mine. I started work again on September 17 in a conference room at a law firm that wanted to help. Two weeks later, my firm had reopened offices on 42nd Street, in Midtown Manhattan. Our new office pales in comparison to the space in the World Trade Center, but I don't find myself dwelling on that fact. I am happy to be able to still work, as is everyone in my office. I consider it a miracle that all employees in my firm made it out of the attack alive.

I no longer cry all of the time. My tears only come when I specifically think about what happened and how many lives were changed forever. I will remember September 11, 2001 for the rest of my life. I realized how important the people in my life are to me. While I do not want to remember the overwhelming feelings and emotions of that day, I hope I will always remember the things I learned that day about myself and my life.

- Erin Byrnes

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Tony Cassino... I was a part-time consultant to the Firm assisting them with special projects, one of which was to help select new financial software. A meeting was scheduled for that morning with Paul Beinstock and others from the Finance Department to prepare for a meeting the following day with one of the software vendors. Little did I know that the next meeting I would have with this vendor would not be for a follow-up demonstration of their product, but to discuss an immediate implementation of their software.

I commute from Long Island and arrived at Penn Station at about 8:15 a.m. and proceeded to take the subway to WTC. The subways were delayed that morning and I finally caught a train about 8:30 a.m. I met Gus Georgiadis on the subway and he told me he was going down to visit the Washington DC Office later that day and had plans to see a ballgame at Camden Yards that evening. We got to the WTC mall around 8:50 a.m. and as we were proceeding toward the Towers, a crowd of people started running toward us. My first thought was that there was a madman with a gun firing at people in the mall. As we proceeded to exit to the

street, someone said "a plane hit the tower".

Gus and I found ourselves in front of the Post Office across the street from the North Tower. After glimpsing at the tower, we walked a block away and stood in front of a building on Park Place between Church Street and Broadway. We both were looking at the North Tower in utter amazement and wondered how a commercial airliner could hit that tower on such a clear day. As we watched the debris fly from the windows and dodged firemen and policemen making their way toward the tower, I was trying to contact my wife at work on my cell phone to let her know I was okay. I had just left my wife at Penn Station. As I was becoming more frustrated because I couldn't get a signal, I saw the second plane hit the South Tower. I will never forget the concussion I felt from behind my head nor the sound of that explosion. Next came the fireball. As people started running, I lost track of Gus.

I bent over to get my brief case, and noticed that the sidewalk was full of glass and the windows behind me blew out. Although there was no panic on the faces of people, many were running and in some cases falling. The sounds of sirens were everywhere and it sounded like one constant siren. After spending a little time gazing at this surreal look of the Towers burning, I started heading north on Broadway.

I stopped at a bar to see if I could get to a phone, but to no avail. As I was watching the TV in the bar, I could not believe what I was seeing. I knew it was important to contact my wife who I was certain was frantic and was probably dealing with all the phone calls from our children. After spending some time looking at the TV, I continued up Broadway heading toward my wife's office in midtown. I recall wondering what would blow up next as I passed City Hall. The next thing I knew one of the Towers had collapsed.

I was in shock as I headed north and remember continuously praying for the people who were caught in the Towers. I was finally able to telephone my wife and told her I was on my way to her office and to try to make arrangements with some friends who lived in the City because I wasn't sure if we would be able to get out of the

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City. I finally got to her office around noon and she met me in the lobby. She asked me if I was okay since she noticed blood on my shirt. I told her I didn't know how the blood got there. I asked her if she knew the building came down and she said both buildings came down. I was not aware of the second one collapsing.

We left her office around 1:30 p.m. since we heard there was service out of Penn Station. I tried to get to a hospital to donate blood, but the lines were incredibly long. As we made our way toward Penn Station, a policeman told us there was no service and we should turn around and go over the 59th Street Bridge. As we were crossing the bridge watching the fighter jets over the City, people were generously passing out water. I finally got up enough courage to take a subway when we were in Queens and we made our way to the Jamaica Terminal of the Long Island Railroad. The railroad was very crowded and we finally got home at around 5:30 p.m. As we walked in the house, the phone was ringing and it was a friend who wanted to make sure we were both all right. For the rest of the night, I was on the phone returning calls from friends and family.

Since 9/11, what started out as a part-time consulting arrangement with the Firm has evolved into a full-time position with the Firm. The damage control environment we lived through during those months following 9/11 has created a special bond for me with the Thacher family.

- Tony Cassino

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Valerie D. Chandler... The morning of September 11, 2001 was such a bright and beautiful day.

I decided to wear one of my most beautiful suits (and 2-1/2 heels) to work that morning before the season changed, thereby planning my lunch hour, which was to sit in the Plaza of the World Trade Center.

My commute from New Jersey that morning was no different than any other morning, although for some unknown reason, a passenger aboard the New Jersey Transit train asked me a peculiar question: "So, how do you feel about being alive this morning?" my reply was: "I thank God for each

and every morning that I wake up".

I arrived in the lobby of the World Trade Center at 8:35 a.m. I proceeded into the ladies room as usual and into the cafeteria for breakfast. After my usual teasing with the cafeteria staff, I moved on to get a spoon for oatmeal. At that moment, an attorney, Maria Livanos ran into the cafeteria shouting for us to get out of the building because something was going on in Tower One. The look on her face assured me that there was definitely something wrong (Maria Livanos and I also witnessed the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993). I immediately dropped the spoon and headed back to my station to retrieve my hand bag (which had my cellular phone) so that I could contact my husband and family.

As I ran down the hallway towards my work station, I could see debris, smoke and papers flying from one of the conference room windows. At that time, fear definitely set in and I started to get very nervous and shaky. By the time I reached the stairway, there were a number of co-workers there. We proceeded to walk down the stairs, while trying to use our cellular phones to contact family, but to no avail. There was talk of a airplane hitting Tower One, and I'm thinking "how did that happen, its such a bright and clear day -- not realizing that people were dying." "I convinced myself that it's the World Trade Center, they will put the fire out and everything's going to be o.k., and being that it was not our building, we would return to the floors in a little while." As we continued to walk down the stairwell, I noticed that a number of people who started out with me were missing (they apparently took the elevator). I stopped on one of the floors and could smell smoke in the hallways, so I continued to head down the stairs. Over the loud speaker, we heard an address from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announcing that everyone should go back to their floors. I truly felt a need to keep moving, as well as John Martorana, Manager of the Copy Center (and Fire Warden for the 39th Floor) telling us to keep going.

By the time we arrived to the 25th Floor, there were employees from other companies telling us, in an irate fashion, to go back to our floors -- that it was not our building. At that time, a young lady