



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## TEN YEARS AGO OUR WORLD CHANGED

PATTY RITCHIE September 2, 2011



Ten years ago, on Sept. 11, our world changed.

Our nation discovered that the end of the cold war had not left us without enemies plotting our destruction.

But as we watched in horror as the twin towers fell and thousands of our countrymen were murdered on national television, we also witnessed our nation come together in a way that had not occurred since the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in the 1940s.

People of all religions, colors, ethnic origins and ways of life came together to vow they would work to insure that the sacrifices of those who died in that tragedy would not be in vain.

Shortly after the Sept. 11th attack, firefighters and emergency workers from across Central and Northern New York volunteered to travel to New York City to lend a hand to help the exhausted emergency workers who had responded to help their neighbors when the tragedy occurred.

Community groups and individuals across Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties collected goods and donated money out of their own pockets to help the families who had suffered from the attack.

I know it made me proud to see the way my friends, neighbors and fellow New Yorkers came together to help each other.

On Sept. 11th, individuals at the World Trade Center, on Flight 93 and at the Pentagon showed all of us the real meaning of heroism. People from all walks of life showed that they understood what it means to put the safety of others first.

The men and women of our armed forces, including the 10th Mountain Division and the families of Fort Drum, have repeatedly shown their understanding of the lessons of Sept. 11th and what it takes to keep our nation and its citizens safe.

The New York State Museum and New York's September 11th Memorial Museum are sponsoring 30 New York Remembers exhibits around New York State. Nearby exhibits include the Dulles State Office Building in Watertown and SUNY Potsdam. The exhibits provide a powerful glimpse into the horror of that day while paying tribute to the sacrifices of those who died and those whose efforts that day made all of us proud to be Americans.

While a host of lessons have been drawn from the tragic events of that day, the aftermath of Sept. 11th illustrated to me that the spirit of volunteerism and community is alive and well across our great nation. When trouble hits, Americans come together to lend a hand and help each other. Today, our state and nation face a radically different kind of crisis, but the lessons we all learned a decade ago still apply to the challenges our communities face.

By working together, by reaching out to each other, we can help each other. The heroes of Sept. 11th taught us how to come together. By following their example, we honor them and the sacrifices they made that day.