

Remembering September

11 2001

They were young professionals, preparing for a routine workday, both in the office and on a business trip. They were retirees, looking forward to seeing family on a routine flight. But that day—September 11, 2001—would not be routine.

Among the nearly 3,000 people who died during the attacks were six alumni—three who had just settled in at their offices in the World Trade Center; two who were flying aboard United Flight 93 when it crashed in rural Pennsylvania; and one who rushed to help survivors escaping the crumbling towers. As the nation marks the 10th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, we talk with classmates of those who died about their friends.

Profiles by Robin L. Flanigan

Jeremy Glick '93

It all started with leftover pizza. Jeremy Glick knocked on Ron Zaykowski's dorm room door at the beginning of their freshman year and offered to share the rest of his dinner.

"Within months we became best friends," recalls Zaykowski '92. "We were truly like brothers."

Glick, a sales and marketing executive who was on United Airlines Flight 93 because his original flight had been canceled the day before, is believed to have been one of several passengers to counterattack the hijackers. His bravery earned him two posthumous honors: the Arthur Ashe Courage Award and the Medal for Heroism, the highest civilian honor bestowed by the Sons of the American Revolution.

While at Rochester, Glick was president of the



Jeremy and Lyzbeth Glick

Rochester chapter of the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity, where a plaque hangs in his honor at the entrance.

In 1993 he became a U.S. National Collegiate Judo champion.

"I was a 6-foot-tall, 255-pound football player and he could bring me to my knees in three seconds, just grabbing my wrist the right way," says Zaykowski, who remains

in close contact with Glick's widow, Lyzbeth, and daughter and helped establish the Jeremy L. Glick Memorial Scholarship Fund—awarded to recognize Rochester Greek system students for their leadership.

Brandon Mathews '92, another fraternity brother, remembers a late-night football game between friends in which he and Glick were on opposing sides. Mathews and two others preemptively tackled Glick at the same time. Glick's martial arts training kicked in and Mathews was tossed onto his head. Though the play had been unfair, Glick later apologized. "Our conversation couldn't have lasted more than four sentences, but I remember it as vividly as though it were today," Mathews says. "He was an exceptional guy for his honesty to himself and to those around him."

Glick is remembered as intelligent and deliberate, with a sense of humor that often involved over-the-top practical jokes. But he was serious about standing up for what was right, regardless of the consequences.

"He was ready at any moment to defend himself and others if necessary," says Zaykowski. "When I was told he was on that flight, I knew immediately that the hijackers had picked the wrong plane. With that guy in that situation, there was only one outcome. There was no other way it could have ended, in my mind."

Jean Hoadley Peterson '69N

Quiet and unassuming, Jean Hoadley Peterson led a life of service.

As a nursing student at the University, she would return to the hospital after hours just to say hello to patients she'd seen earlier in the day. Many years later, she was an emergency medical technician, led Bible studies, traveled overseas for mission work, lent money to families in need, and offered help to drug and alcohol addicts and to pregnant women in crisis.

Peterson and her husband, Donald, were on United Airlines Flight 93, on their way to an annual family reunion at Yosemite National Park. The night before the flight, Barbara Bates Smullen '66N, '69N (MS),



Jean Hoadley Peterson

'83W (EdD) spoke with Peterson, who'd just returned from a trip to meet her first grandchild.

Smullen and Peterson talked by phone weekly and wrote voluminous letters after moving to different parts of the country, seeing each other through child rearing and divorces and spending hours on hefty theological debates.

Peterson was a conservative Christian; Smullen was a liberal Presbyterian-turned-Catholic. Despite their religious differences, Peterson was godmother to both of Smullen's sons.

Smullen fondly remembers how much Peterson gave of herself. Though busy with her own challenging work during her senior year, Peterson gathered data as a research assistant for Smullen's master's thesis and volunteered to make nursery curtains for Smullen's first baby (she threw in a matching diaper carrier and lined the inside of the toybox as a surprise). And she was never happy being a pampered houseguest—she cooked special dishes, tidied up rooms, and helped with the ironing.

This is how Smullen envisions Peterson in her last moments, continuing to serve.

"I picture Jean on the floor of the plane with the injured and with her husband, leading the people in the Lord's Prayer," she says. "I feel confident that's what they would've been doing."

Jeffrey Smith '87, '88S (MBA)

Away from the buttoned-up financial industry scene, in which he was an equity research analyst at Sandler O'Neill and Partners, Jeffrey Smith liked to go scuba diving, feverishly cheer on the University of Miami Hurricanes football team, and hike—oftentimes with one of his two young daughters strapped to his back.

He and his wife, Ellen, frequently traveled around the world to live life to the fullest.

Michael Degenhart '88S (MBA) recalls being “immediately struck by Jeff’s smile and sense of humor” after meeting him in January 1987 at a student-run investment club on campus. They became fast friends, joining study groups together and heading to the Elm-



Jeffrey Smith (left) and Michael Degenhart

wood Inn on Sunday afternoons for wings and beer.

“He was a fun guy,” says Degenhart. “He was always trying to get a rise out of people.”

Degenhart got together with Smith often after graduation. They’d eat nice dinners, golf, and talk about their careers, including Smith’s desire to land a job at a New York City investment firm. Smith got his wish in early 1996, then that fall proposed to his future wife on Little Cayman Island while the pair sat stargazing in their wet bathing suits. Degenhart read at their wedding the next spring, after which the newly married couple left for a brief residence on a dive boat in the Coral Sea, off the Great Barrier Reef.

Smith was a groomsman at Degenhart’s wedding in June 2001.

“That was the last time I saw him,” says Degenhart, who had plans to catch up with Smith on a business trip to Manhattan in late September 2001. “Jeff and Ellen talked about their trip in March to Italy, and my wife and I were honeymooning in Italy, so we shared a lot of ideas.”

Zhe (Zack) Zeng '95, '98S (MBA)

To those who knew Zhe (Zack) Zeng, it was no shock to learn that he had headed toward the World Trade Center after the first tower collapsed—not away from the dust and ash like most everyone else—to help the injured. Trained as an emergency medical technician, Zeng grabbed some supplies from his office at the Bank of New York, where he was project manager for American depository receipts, before being filmed by a television news crew, still in his business suit, administering first aid to a woman on a stretcher. Then the second tower fell.

To honor Zeng’s heroism, the New York City Council renamed a street after him in the Chinatown area

of Manhattan. The street, known as Zhe “Zack” Zeng Way, borders a park where Zeng used to meet with friends.

Zeng has often been described as selfless, generous, and humble.

“He was like a brother and mentor to me,” says Hai-Yong Gao '99, who was four years behind Zeng and was introduced to him as a freshman at the



Zhe (Zack) Zeng

University, where Zeng was working on his master’s degree in business administration. It was the first time Gao had ever been away from home, and it was a relief to meet someone with whom he had so much in common. “We both emigrated from China as teenagers. We both went to the same high school. Our parents didn’t know much English, and we had to interpret for them. It was like we knew each other already.”

They remained close after that, and by 2001 were both living and working in New York City, where they caught up during weekly phone calls, met occasionally for weekday lunches, went fishing on Long Island, and played golf and tennis together.

“Honestly, I wish that he was not a hero,” says Gao, who saw the second plane hit from his office, “so he could be here today. But I’m not surprised at the way things turned out.”

Brendan Dolan '86

"He was a best friend to a lot of people," Lee Taylor '86 says of Brendan Dolan, who was vice president in charge of the energy group at Carr Futures in the World Trade Center.

Taylor met Dolan on his first day as a freshman. After graduation, they lived about a half hour away from each other in New Jersey and got together on weekends to swim in Dolan's pool and spend time with each other's families.

"He was a solid family man who loved his wife, Stacey, and two daughters, Sarah and Samantha," recalls Taylor, adding that he, like so many others, got into the energy broker business with Dolan's help. "He looked after a lot of us, and was always there whenever anybody needed him."



Brendan Dolan

A quarterback on the Yellowjackets football team, a rugby player, and the social chairman for the Phi Upsilon fraternity, Dolan was the second in his family of five kids to go to Rochester, following a year behind his brother Charles Dolan '85. Dolan "was one of those people who was happy all the time, no matter what he was

doing," says Doug Darrow '85, one of Dolan's fraternity brothers. "He always wanted to be the host, or facilitate a pick-up game of basketball, football, or rugby. He just wanted everyone to have fun and wasn't afraid to work hard at trying to make that happen."

And despite the good-natured rivalry that exists among fraternities, notes Mark San Fratello '85, "Brendan rose above that and was friends with everybody. He was at ease in every setting."

San Fratello, who was a tight end on the football team, remembers being impressed during one practice in which the coach singled out Dolan for a mistake he'd made during a skeleton drill: "The coach got after him good, and I thought, 'This guy is going to blow up and get worse.' But then he threw the next ball to me, and it was a good, tight spiral. It said something about his guts and fortitude."

Taylor, who still gets together with his tight-knit group of friends from college, knows that the reunions would take place more regularly if Dolan were still around.

"It's surprising that it has been 10 years," he says. "It really feels like yesterday."

Aram Iskenderian '82

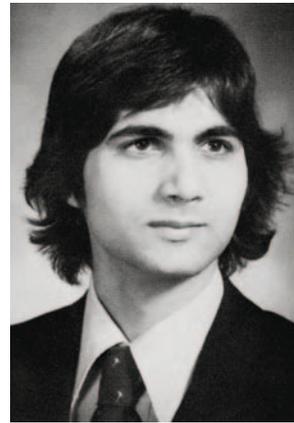
Aram Iskenderian was patient and even-tempered, a loyal family man who made sure he was on the six o'clock train every weeknight to help bathe his children and put them to bed.

A vice president in global risk management at Cantor Fitzgerald, he had survived the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and was on the phone with his wife, who'd called to report that their twin sons hadn't cried when she dropped them off on their first day of preschool, when the first plane hit in 2001.

He had married his high school sweetheart, Sheri, first capturing her attention—and not in a good way—in the 10th grade by pulling her hair. Though she often complained at home that a boy at school was bothering her, she would eventually describe him as

her soulmate. The couple stayed together while attending college hundreds of miles apart, and tied the knot in 1983.

Besides being a hands-on dad, Iskenderian, who also had two daughters, was known for his love of household renovations—give him a wall to knock down and he was happy—and helping others. He was



Aram Iskenderian

a regular blood donor, and was planning to ride in a September 23 bike-a-thon to raise money for a co-worker with multiple sclerosis.

Iskenderian's calm, methodical approach to life extended to his career.

"I think that was why he was so successful," says Dick Keil '83, one of Iskenderian's Sigma Chi fraternity brothers. "He was a very steady guy, even back in college. Never too high and never too low. When you're working in finance, that's a pretty important attribute to have."

September 11 Memorials

A set of three tables and benches on the plaza of Meliora Hall is dedicated to those who died September 11, 2001. A gift of the Class of 2002, the memorial includes the names of the six University alumni who died that day. The fourth-floor patio of Gleason Hall is dedicated to Simon alumni Jeffrey Smith and Zack Zeng.