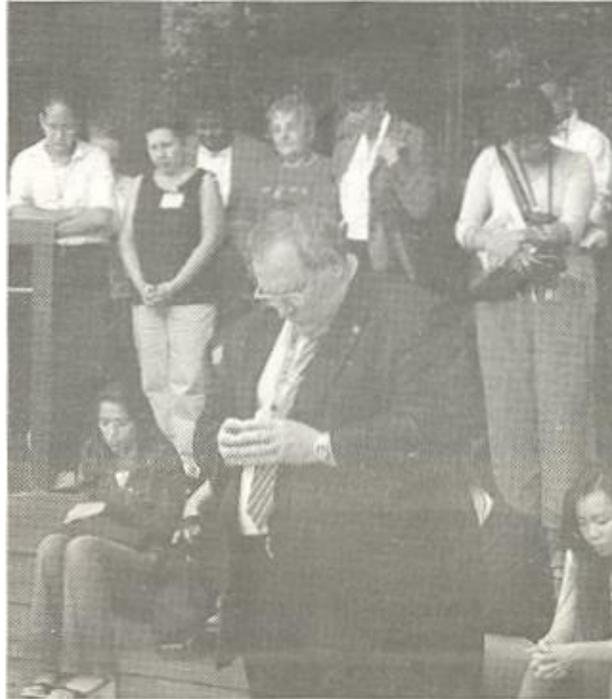




9/11 Pace University Oral History Project

Emotional ceremonies commemorate 9/11 at Pace

Saloni Ahuja



With flags at half-mast, President Caputo led a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m. on September 11th for the University from the steps of One Pace Plaza, where students, faculty, and passersby assembled to pay their respects to victims of last year's attacks on the World Trade Center. After the gathering, some made their way to Ground Zero while others stayed around the front of the campus to contemplate the loss of life and the void in the sky that was once occupied with two luminous towers. Later, a remembrance service and a candlelight vigil were also held.

The ceremonies continued at 10:20 a.m., when once again President Caputo led a moment of silence, and bells were supposed to ring throughout the city at the precise time when the first tower of the World Trade Center collapsed. However, there was an unspecified problem with the bells at Pace, and the only ones that could be heard were from a distance at 10:29 a.m. Instead, the students, faculty, and visitors engaged in another moment of remembrance at the front of the university. Caputo promised to rectify the situation for next year.

At noon, all were invited to gather in the gymnasium for a service of remembrance. Participants at the ceremony held hands and formed a circle. The heaviness in the room grew stronger as Caputo began listing all the names of the forty Pace alumni and four students who perished in the attacks. Marijo Russell 'Grady, Dean for Students, went around consoling participants overcome with emotion. As faculty, students, and staff shared their thoughts on the events of September 11, they invited others to do so as well.



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Caputo also announced that by 2003, Pace would have a memorial for the victims as part of the downtown campus. Though no one else stood up to share their thoughts, the silence of what everyone was thinking and feeling was profound. After these reflections, the group joined hands for a moment of silence, and sang "America the Beautiful," led by student Ethan Veenhuis.

Though the ceremony was originally planned to have participants join hands around Pace, there were not enough people to do so, and the circle was formed within the gymnasium.

The day went on as silently as it had started around campus. Classes were optional for some, as instructors allowed students to grieve and remember. After evening classes adjourned around 9 p.m., there was a candlelight vigil organized by the students. The turnout was so large, that candles had to be broken into halves and thirds to accommodate everyone. After the lighting of the candles, students made their way over to the nearest fire station on Beekman Street, singing a medley of patriotic songs. After thanking and cheering on the fire fighters, engaged in their own mourning for their lost friends, family, and coworkers, the group of students made their way to Ground Zero, to pay their respects at the site where close to 3,000 people lost their lives last year.

On this tragic anniversary, the Pace community confirmed its unity and commitment to the city. Members of the university joined together, and mourned the loss of lives along with the world.

