

September 16 - 22, 2011



## Nation remembers 9/11



President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama visit Arlington National Cemetery on Sept. 10 in honor of military personnel who were killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

By Kalin Thomas  
Contributing Writer

### Local tributes marked by prayer, silence

ATLANTA – From tearful moments of silence to hushed candlelight vigils, thousands of Atlantans joined Americans all over the world Sunday in ceremonies commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

At Ebenezer Baptist Church in the Auburn Avenue/Edgewood District, bell choir director Cynthia Terry struck the chime four times at 8:46 a.m. – the precise time the first terrorist plane hit the World Trade Center in 2001.

On the other side of town, in Tucker, DeKalb County officials unveiled their 9/11 memorial at the DeKalb Public Safety Headquarters. A group of DeKalb firefighters secured a piece of the World Trade Center from New York and brought it back for artists to incorporate into the memorial structure.

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Once the memorial was unveiled, there was 11 seconds of silence and a 21-gun salute.

"As we keep in our minds and hearts on the blessings and freedoms we enjoy each and every day, let us direct our actions toward those things that build community, that build understanding, that build trust, and that build tolerance in the world," DeKalb County CEO Burrell Ellis said in tribute.

President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama also attended ceremonies commemorating the anniversary of attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in a field in western Pennsylvania. The theme of many of those ceremonies was peace and understanding.

Building tolerance and understanding also is what nearly 600 people focused on at the 9/11 Interfaith Gathering at the Decatur Hotel and Conference Center. The event was sponsored by the Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta.

The gathering of Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Sikhs was meant to heal the wounds of 9/11 by fostering relationships between diverse faiths. Gloria Sylvester of Atlanta said she came because she wanted to be a part of a collective event for 9/11.

"I am non-denominational, that's why I liked the idea of an interfaith gathering," she said. "And I wanted to celebrate the lives of those people who were brave and sacrificing for peace in the world. I prefer to look at the positives of 9/11."

One of the highlights of the event occurred when a representative of each faith recited "The Golden Rule." Each faith has its own version of "Do unto others..." or "Treat others the way you want to be treated."

Afterward, participants broke into smaller groups to discuss how they practice the Golden Rule in their own lives.

"We had a Hindu, a Christian, a Muslim and a person who didn't profess any religion in our group. We felt that the essence of The Golden Rule is compassion," said Tayyibah Taylor, a Muslim and publisher/editor-in-chief of Azizah Magazine.

"I'm optimistic about the future of humanity," Taylor said, "and hope that people can get beyond the stereotypes of Muslims."

Clint Fluker, a non-practicing Christian from Decatur added: "I learned that as we talk about The Golden Rule, the idea of being of service comes up regularly. I work in a service business [to underserved healthcare communities], so it's good to know that you can still practice The Golden Rule even if you're not in a specific religion."

Peace also was the theme of the Andrew Young's speech at the Atlanta's World Trade Center 9/11 Anniversary Luncheon on Sept. 12. About 120 people listened to the speech, which was part lecture, part sermon.

"He spoke of the importance of peace and how peace affects global economies," said Lily Postolchi, membership coordinator of The World Trade Center. Young included a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "We must learn to live together as brothers, or perish together as fools."

The 9/11 Interfaith Service coordinator, Jan Swanson, concluded: "That was our blessing –

that people saw this not just as one event, but as a process.

"They want to continue the process where you spend enough time with each other to be transformed. That's how the world is changed."

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## A new 'day of infamy'



Marking Osama bin Laden's death where the terrorist inflicted his greatest damage, President Barack Obama soberly laid a wreath at New York's ground zero in May, declaring to the city and the world: "When we say we will never forget, we mean what we say." Obama is expected to attend ceremonies this week commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist bombings.

### Atlantans to commemorate tragic events of Sept. 11

By Kalin Thomas  
Contributing Writer

Immediately, it was personal – a new day to live in infamy in American history. In the initial seconds, there was confusion. Perhaps this was just a tragic accident, a ghastly series of horrid circumstances that ultimately would take nearly 3,000 lives.

But as the morning of Sept. 11, 2001 unfolded, it became crystal clear. This was no accident. This was terrorism, cold and calculated.

What American doesn't recall exactly where he or she was on the morning four hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and an obscure field in southwest Pennsylvania? As the 10th anniversary of 9/11 is commemorated this week, thousands of Atlantans are reflecting on what they were doing on the worst day in U.S. history. But one Atlantan can never forget where she was – Ground Zero.

"I was an executive assistant for a construction management company, and I was on the phone with the building engineer for the second tower, when the plane hit," said Rev. Angela Thompson of Hillside International Chapel & Truth Center.

"After the building collapsed, we were one of the first responders along with New York fire fighters," she added. "It was devastating, but you had to [keep your emotions in check] to keep moving."

"Several of my co-workers were killed, but the worst day was when they pulled out the last fire fighter, because we knew they weren't going to find anymore people," she recalled. "We all cried that day."

Thousands of metro Atlantans will commemorate the events of 9/11 – some in tears – at dozens of churches, community centers and government buildings throughout the region.

Rev. Gerald Durley, senior pastor of Providence Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, said his congregation will attend the Sept. 11 Anniversary Interfaith Gathering coordinated by the Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta.

"I hope that a service of this nature will allow people who are still going through the pain of 9/11 to know that we have not forgotten them and we're still lifting them up in prayer," said Durley, noting that his members will wear white to "rededicate ourselves back to our excellence as a people and as a nation."

"When people of different faiths come together... we let our young people know that they should work on finding areas of peace and that we are one America," he added.

Faith Alliance spokesman Gillian Renault said the free event is scheduled for 5 p.m. Sept. 11 at the

Decatur Hotel and Conference Center, 130 Clairmont Road in Decatur. It is intended to unite the interfaith community and "move forward and heal the wounds of 9/11 by fostering relationships between people of different faiths," she said.

Event supporters include the Concerned Black Clergy, the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam and Providence Baptist Church.

Rev. Durley of Providence said he wrote a piece that he will read at the 9/11 Anniversary Interfaith Gathering called, "We Are One America." It includes the lines:

"As the soot and ash came down, we became one color... As we carried each other down the stairs of the burning buildings, we became one class."

"During 9/11, we were humbled into being one people," he added. "But we shouldn't have to have a tragedy before we start caring for each other."

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**'So sweet, like honey'**