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SEPTEMBER 11 25 YEARS LATER

SURVIVAL & SACRIFICE



Retired FDNY firefighters James Efthimiades, Jeffrey Coniglio, Robert Bacon, Jim McGlynn and John Drumm, have lunch at O'Hara's Pub near the World Trade Center on Aug 5. On Sept. 11, 2001, after going back into the North Tower to search for Drumm, the other four firefighters became trapped in a stairwell when the tower collapsed on them. They were rescued five hours later, and discovered that Drumm had escaped the building before it collapsed.

SETH HARRISON/THE JOURNAL NEWS

After many years, FDNY firefighter shares his story

Thomas C. Zambito New York State Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

Over the years, the firefighters of Manhattan's Engine Company 39 have gotten together to share their story of surviving the collapse of the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. At memorial services, for media interviews, a documentary.

Absent was John Drumm, the fellow firefighter they went back into the north tower to save that day.

Drumm didn't want to stand in the way of what he considered their story — going back in the north tower to save a brother firefighter only to have the 110-story building collapse on top of them. Had they died, Drumm isn't sure he could have coped. And there are the 343 other FDNY firefighters who died that day while he lived. Survivor's guilt.

But after 25 years, it was time. When James "Jim" McGlynn, who led the Engine 39 team on 9/11, reached out to let him know they would be getting together to take pictures at the 9/11 Memorial and talk about the day, he pulled out his dress blues with the 343 pin on the lapel and made the trip to Lower Manhattan from Pine Bush in Orange County, N.Y.

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"I don't talk about it unless I'm with really dear friends. I appreciate that there are people who are willing to ask, instead of not ask, but for me to talk about it isn't easy."

John Drumm

One sibling aided 9/11 victim; the other lost life

Marcia Greenwood

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ruth Clifford McCourt made a big impression.

"She was business-like, she was very professional," said Nancy King of Webster. "But she was bubbly. And the freckles — oh my god, the freckles."

And the red hair and the Irish brogue.

A Cork, Ireland, native, McCourt was known as Ruth Scott in the early 1970s, when her mother, Paula Scott, moved here with her family.

Ruth was beautiful, said Candy Genazzio of Victor. "She dressed wonderfully. She had very good style sense and just very energetic."

Ruth's brother Ron Clifford also was a high-energy person, Genazzio said.

"He was a character," she said. "He was a lot of fun. He was very flirty, and he had a good sense of humor."

The siblings also exuded genuine warmth.

"People just loved talking to Ruth because she cared for people," Genazzio said. "Everybody loved Ruth. Everybody admired her. Everybody wanted to be like her."

Modeling brought the women together. During the late 1970s, they attended and then taught at the Barbi-zon School of Modeling in downtown Rochester.

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Candy Genazzio of Victor holds an angel figurine given to her by Ruth Clifford McCourt, who died in the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

MARCIA GREENWOOD/
DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Monroe County deputies donated puppy to mourning firefighters

Marcia Greenwood

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK

On Sept. 11, 2001, seven members of the New York City Fire Department's Ladder Company 20 died in the collapse of the World Trade Center's North Tower.

Weeks later, two Rochester-area women arrived unannounced at the

firehouse at 253 Lafayette St. in lower Manhattan with an inspired gift to comfort their surviving colleagues — a Dalmatian puppy.

Kathy Cahill and Sandra Robinson, then Monroe County sheriff's deputies, hoped the dog would take firefighters' minds off their sorrows.

"I think all the firehouses in New York City were dealing with an unspeakable sense of loss and grief," Robinson told

columnist Jim Memmott in 2021. "Donating Twenty seemed to be the right thing to do. The abilities to distract and heal are things we've always associated with puppies."

Acquired from a Rochester-area breeder, Twenty did and that then some, quickly becoming the company's mascot and beloved companion.

In those early days, she also accompanied Ladder 20 firefighters to a lot of

funerals. "We were burying guys left and right at that time," one firefighter told New York Times reporter Corey Kilgannon. Twenty was right there by their side.

In 2016, when Twenty's health was failing and it was clear she was nearing the end of her life, active and retired firefighters filed into Ladder 20 to say

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