

President's Message



9/11 Ten Years Later

By John M. Howe

I will never forget that Tuesday morning in September 2001.

I was getting ready for court. I had a hearing in Judge Baker's Juvenile Division courtroom. As I stood in front of the television tying my tie while watching *The Today Show* on NBC, the show's host, Matt Lauer, reported that an airplane had just crashed into one of the World Trade Center's towers. I figured it must have been a small private airplane, but the video that was being shown was of a large gaping hole in the structure. Moments later, the camera frame shuddered, and a huge fireball filled the screen. At that very instant, I, and millions of others, realized exactly what was happening. It did not take long for us to realize that this day was going to have a profound effect on, not only our country and its way of life, but also upon the entire world order.

There is no other single event in modern history to have ever been burned so deeply into our collective memory such that we all remember exactly what we were doing when learned of it. What made 9/11 so much more vivid was that the horrors played out live (and repeatedly) on every national and international news outlet. Never before had there been a situation where in a U.S. President's plane could not land and had to be escorted by fighter planes - inside U.S. airspace. Never before in the history of flight had all U.S. airspace been completely closed to civilian aviation. The moon-landing, the Space Shuttle Disasters, and the Oklahoma City Bombing all paled in comparison. While we knew our laws and justice system would be forever changed; how much so, we could not have imagined. The events of September 11, 2001 did more to test the limits of our Constitution than any other single event since the attack on Pearl Harbor, and some would argue even longer. Almost every amendment in the Bill of Rights has been tested in 9/11's aftermath.

The First Amendment has been tested by challenges to the rights of Muslim Americans to dress, fly, and ironically, to build a mosque (or cultural center) in the vicinity of the World Trade

Center Memorial. We have also seen the curtailment of access and dealings to information about the activities of government agencies and officials under the guise of national security. The scope of the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms was tested by pilots wanting to carry guns into the cockpit. The Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable search and seizure was tested by the issue of warrantless wiretaps. The Fifth Amendment rights to due process of law and against self-incrimination have been tested by the issues of what constitutes torture and whether U.S.-born civilians can be tried in military courts instead of civilian courts. The Sixth Amendment right to speedy and public trials has been tested by the issue of whether foreign detainees can be held indefinitely without trial on U.S. military bases and whether they are entitled to trials by jury. Whether states are barred, under the Tenth Amendment, from enforcing immigration laws or from enacting their own immigration laws are issues presently being debated.

In the dark days and months ifollowing the 9/11 attacks, which were orchestrated by cowards attempting to hijack a peaceful religion, many questioned whether America had the resolve to safeguard and honor the boundaries of its own Constitution. Through mostly civilized debate, we continue to seek resolution to many of the issues created by the infamous attacks of 9/11. Ten years later, we still honor the memory of the 2,819 people who perished that day. Ten years later, Osama bin Laden is dead, but our Constitution is alive and well. God Bless the United States of America.

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Featured Directors:

The Presidents of the Young Lawyers Section and North County Section serve as members of our Board of Directors. This month, I will introduce them to you. They are a pleasure to work with.

Jason Lazarus, Young Lawyers Section President



I have had the pleasure of knowing Jason for several years. Jason attended law school at the University of Florida (Go Gators) and has been practicing law for 13 years. He currently practices Business Litigation at

Holland and Knight in West Palm Beach. He and his lovely wife, Heather, have two adorable children, Haley (8) and Ryan (4). They also have a Cocker Spaniel/Alaskan Husky mix named Dutchess. When he's not working, Jason's favorite activity is "any activities with my kids!" Incidentally, Jason's birthday is this month (September 19). Happy Birthday Jason!

Ron Ponzoli, North County Section President



Not only is Ron an all-around great guy, he is a husband, a dad, a University of Miami law graduate, 14-year lawyer and a legendary fisherman (ask any fish)! Ron currently practices Business Litigation at Richman Greer in West Palm Beach, where he is a shareholder. He and his wife, Rachel, have two sons. An interesting factoid about Ron is that he loves the ocean so much that he first contemplated a career in marine biology. Ron's birthday is on August 20, so mark it for next year. Happy Belated Birthday Ron! Hope you got to go fishing.