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leaders

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2012

THE ENCOURAGING LEADER

BE A HERO TO SOMEONE

Everyone has a chance to be a hero to someone. You don't even have to be dead to be a hero. With Memorial Day approaching, it got me to thinking about those in my life that I have looked up to as heroes. Unfortunately, holidays like Memorial Day and funerals seem to be the only times that we really stop and think about the impact that someone had on our lives. These are the times that we remember, or better yet, celebrate their life and their lasting legacy on those that they touched.

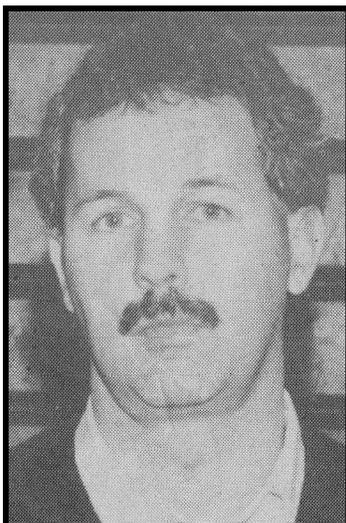
December 2, 2001. That is when my mentor and high school basketball coach, Bill Dunn, died of colon cancer at the much too young age of 48. He was in Michigan and I was in Texas coaching. I was too busy to visit and figured he'd come through and I'd have a chance to see him again. That didn't happen. I never got a chance to tell him what he meant to me. Actually, strike that last statement. I had plenty of chances. It just never seemed important or urgent enough. There'd be time for that some other day. There's always another day, right? Well, that day never came.

Let's celebrate those who impact us, not just by respecting their lessons and legacy after they are gone, but by doing it while they are alive. Your wife means the world to you? Then treat her like it each day. You admire your boss? Then act like it when he or she

asks you to do something you don't want to do. You say that your employees are vitally important to your business; that's it's about the people in your company? Make them feel important and wanted each day. Your parents made you into the leader you are today? Tell them.

I was 27 years old when Coach Dunn died, which happened to correspond to my first college head coaching job. At that time, I counted up how many family and friends had passed away during my lifetime. The number was an astounding 31. Obviously, the longer a person lives the more likely, their number will be high and continue to grow. In this world, we experience many highs and lows. We see a great deal of life and death. However, one thing remains constant...we only have one life to live and only one go around to impact the world and be a hero to someone. What will your life be about? If I don't treat my players, my friends, my family like my heroes treated me, then I am disrespecting and shortchanging their example.

The tears shed, the sacrifices made, and the inspiration derived from the life and death of heroes leave a shallow footprint if we fail to build off of this and honor them with our everyday actions.



Bill Dunn won 70% of his games during his career. In 1992, he led a team picked last to an 18-2 record, a league championship and a state ranking despite being stuck with Jamy Bechler at point guard.

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Memorial Day Special Issue

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Packing Parachutes



Recently, I was sitting in a restaurant in Kansas City. A man about two tables away kept looking at me. I didn't recognize him. A few minutes into our meal he stood up and walked over to my table, looked down at me, pointed his finger in my face and said, "You're Captain Plumb."

I looked up and I said, "Yes sir, I'm Captain Plumb."

He said, "You flew jet fighters in Vietnam. You were on the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down. You parachuted into enemy hands and spent six years as a prisoner of war."

I said, "How in the world did you know all that?"

He replied, "Because, I packed your parachute."

I was speechless. I staggered to my feet and held out a very grateful hand of thanks. This guy came up with just the proper words. He grabbed my hand, he pumped my arm and said, "I guess it worked."

"Yes sir, indeed it did", I said, "and I must tell you I've said a lot of prayers of thanks for your nimble fingers, but I never thought I'd have the opportunity to express my gratitude in person."

He said, "Were all the panels there?"

"Well sir, I must shoot straight with you," I said, "of the eighteen panels that were supposed to be in that parachute, I had fifteen good ones. Three were torn, but it wasn't your fault, it was mine. I jumped out of that jet fighter at a high rate of speed, close to the ground. That's what tore the panels in the chute. It wasn't the way you packed it."

"Let me ask you a question," I said, "do you keep track of all the parachutes you pack?"

"No" he responded, "it's enough gratification for me just to know that I've served."

I didn't get much sleep that night. I kept thinking about that man. I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform - a Dixie cup hat, a bib in the back and bell bottom trousers. I wondered how many times I might have passed him on board the Kitty Hawk. I wondered how many times I might have seen him and not even said "good morning", "how are you", or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor. How many hours did he spend on that long wooden table in the bowels of that ship weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of those chutes? I could have cared less...until one day my parachute came along and he packed it for me.

Excerpt from Chapter 16 of Charlie Plumb's book "I'M NO HERO".

<http://www.charlieplumb.com/book-insights.htm>



**HUMOR
BREAK**

"No, don't call me a hero. Do you know who the real heroes are? The guys who wake up every morning and go into their normal jobs, and get a distress call from the Commissioner and take off their glasses and change into capes and fly around fighting crime. Those are the real heroes."

Dwight K. Schrute

(Assistant to the Regional Manager, Dunder Mifflin, Inc.)

A Little Girl's \$0.57

On December 1, 1912, Russell H. Conwell, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia, gave a first-hand account of a girl whose \$0.57 led to a great many things. Rev. Conwell said the little girl's name was Hattie May Wiatt. She lived near a church where the Sunday School was very crowded and he told her that one day they would have buildings big enough to allow every one to attend who wanted to. Later, Hattie May Wiatt became sick and died. Rev. Conwell was asked to do the funeral and the girl's mother told him that Hattie May had been saving money to help build a bigger church and gave him the little purse in which she had saved 57 cents. Rev. Conwell had the 57 cents turned into 57 pennies, told the congregation the story of little Hattie May and sold the pennies for a return of about \$250. In addition, 54 of the original 57 pennies were returned to Rev. Conwell and he later put them up on display. This was in 1886 when 57 cents was no small savings account for a little girl from a poor family. Some of the members of the church formed what they called the Wiatt Mite Society which was dedicated to making Hattie May's 57 cents grow as much as possible and to buy the property for the Primary Department of the Sunday school. A house nearby was purchased with the \$250 that Hattie May's 57 cents had produced and the rest is history. The first classes of Temple College, later Temple University, were held in that house. It was later sold to allow Temple College to move and the growth of Temple, along with the founding of the Good Samaritan Hospital (Now the Temple University Hospital) have been powerful testimonies to Hattie May Wiatt's dream.

Excerpt from: <http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/h/hattiemaywiatt.htm>



PARADOX OF POWER

My son Bobby, who coaches with the Cincinnati Reds organization, has become friends with Jim Hickman, a minor league hitting instructor with the Reds. Hickman is in his mid-sixties, having spent thirteen years as an outfielder in the big leagues. He played with the Mets, Dodgers, Cubs, and Cardinals, and he racked up some amazing statistics. Interestingly, all four of his big-league managers went into the Hall of Fame: Casey Stengel, Red Schoendienst, Leo Durocher, and Walter Alston.

Hickman told Bobby about one bad year he had in 1967 while playing for the Dodgers. He didn't play much, had ninety-eight at bats, and hit .163—a rock-bottom season. Bobby asked Jim Hickman what he remembers about that year. Now, you'd think it would be a year he'd rather forget. Yet Hickman says he warmly recalls one thing about that season: "On two different occasions," Hickman said, "Walter Alston brought me into his office and thanked me for my good attitude. He said he appreciated the fact that I was working hard in practice, encouraging the other guys, and contributing any way I could. I can't tell you what that meant to me."

It doesn't take a lot of effort—just a little show of kindness—to make an impression that lasts for decades. If you want to be a leader who loves people, then show you are interested in the career growth and success of your people, not just your own success. Get to know your people. Talk to them and find out what really makes them tick. Take an interest in their interests.

Excerpt from the book "PARADOX OF POWER" by Pat Williams

WHINERS

By: Maya Angelou



When my grandmother was raising me in Stamps, Arkansas, she had a particular routine when people who were known as whiners entered her store. My grandmother would ask the customer, "How are you doing today, Brother Thomas?"

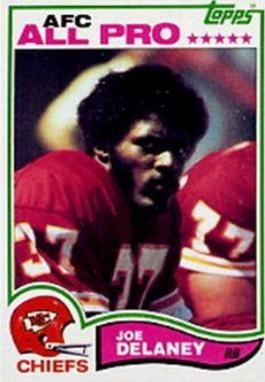
And the person would reply, "Not so good today, Sister Henderson. You see, it's this summer heat. I just hate it. It just frazzles me up and frazzles me down. It's almost killing me." Then my grandmother would stand stoically, her arms folded, and mumble, "Uh-huh, uh-huh." And she would cut her eyes at me to make certain that I had heard the lamentation.

As soon as the complainer was out of the store, my grandmother would call me to stand in front of her. And then she would say the same thing she had said at least a thousand times (it seemed to me). "Sister, did you hear what Brother So-and-So or Sister Much-to-Do complained about?" And I would nod. Mamma would continue, "Sister, there are people who went to sleep all over the world last night, poor and rich and black and white, but they will never wake again. And those dead folks would give anything, anything at all for just five minutes of this weather that person was complaining about. What you're supposed to do when you don't like a thing is change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it. Don't complain."

It is said that persons have few teachable moments in their lives. Mamma seemed to have caught me at each one I had. Whining is not only graceless, but can be dangerous. It can alert a brute that a victim is in the neighborhood.

NO ORDINARY JOE

Remembering a heroic act that ended in tragedy.



Article written by Rick Reilly and appeared in the July 3, 2003 issue of SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Why in creation did Joe Delaney jump into that pit full of water that day?

Why in the world would the AFC's best young running back try to save three drowning boys when he himself couldn't swim?

Nobody -- not his wife, not his mother -- had ever seen him so much as dog-paddle. A year and a half earlier, when he went to the Pro Bowl in Hawaii as the AFC's starting halfback and Rookie of the Year, he never set even a pinkie toe in the ocean or the pool. "Never had," says his wife, Carolyn, who'd known Joe since they were both seven. "In all my years, I never had seen him swim."

So why? Why did the 24-year-old Kansas City Chief try to save three boys he didn't know with a skill he didn't have?

He'd been sitting in the cool shade of a tree on a tar-bubbling afternoon at Chennault Park, a public recreation area in Monroe, La., when he heard voices calling, "Help! Help!" He popped up like a Bobo doll and sprinted toward the pit.

What made Delaney that kind of person? Why did he mow that lonely woman's lawn when he was back home in Houghton, La., rich as he was? Why did he check in on that old man every day he was in town? Why did he show up on the Houghton streets one day with a bag full of new shoes and clothes for kids whose names he'd never heard?

Why could he never think of anything that he wanted for himself? Why didn't he even make a Christmas list? The man never cashed a paycheck in his life. He would throw his checks on top of the TV for his wife. "Don't you want *nothing* for yourself?" Carolyn would ask Joe.

"Nah," he'd say. "You just take care of you and the girls."

"Nothing?"

"Well, if you could give me a little pocket change for the week, I'd appreciate it."

Why didn't he ask somebody else to help those three kids that day? After all, there were hundreds of people at the park, and not another soul dived into that pit. Nobody but Delaney, one guy who *shouldn't* have.

The boys in that pit were struggling to stay afloat. They were two brothers -- Harry and LeMarkits Holland, 11 and 10, respectively -- and a cousin, Lancer Perkins, 11. Of course, LeMarkits was always with Harry. He idolized his big brother. A water park adjacent to Chennault was staging a big promotion with free admission that day, and the boys had wandered over to the pit and waded into the water. Like Delaney, they couldn't swim.

So much of it doesn't make sense. Why hadn't the pit -- a huge rain-filled hole that was left after the dirt had been dug out and used to build a water slide -- been fenced off from the public? Who knew that four feet from the edge of the water the hole dropped off like a cliff to about 20 feet deep?

LeMarkits has said that he remembers the water filling his lungs, the sensation of being pulled to the cold bottom, when all of a sudden a huge hand grabbed his shoulder and heaved him out of the deep water. Delaney dived for the other two boys, sinking below the surface. Folks along the bank waited for him to come up, but he never did. Harry and Lancer drowned with him.

As much as you might hope that LeMarkits has done something with the gift Delaney gave him, so far he hasn't. In an interview with the *Philadelphia Daily News* two years ago, LeMarkits said he has been tortured by the thought that he got to live and Harry didn't. He said he made his mom sell Harry's bike, bed and toys. He even burned Harry's clothes, as if fire could burn his brother from his heart. But it never did. Thirty years old now, LeMarkits got out of jail in May after serving time for distribution of cocaine. There's still time for him to do something wonderful with the life Delaney gave him. After all, Delaney was doing wonderful things with the one he gave up.

He was buried on the Fourth of July, 20 years ago. A telegram from President Reagan was read at the memorial service. The Presidential Citizens Medal was awarded posthumously. Three thousand people came to his funeral. A park in Houghton was named after him. No Chiefs player has worn number 37 since. The 37 Forever Foundation, a nonprofit group in Kansas City, honors him to this day by providing free swimming lessons to inner-city kids.

"I wish they'd had that for Joe and me when we were kids," Carolyn says glumly. She thinks of her Joe every day. She can't help it. Their three daughters and four grandkids remind her of him constantly. There is a pause. "I never thought we wouldn't grow old together."

She's only been on two dates since Joe died. Twenty years, two dates. "Why should I?" she says. "I just keep comparing them to Joe, and they can't stand up. Nobody in the world is like my Joe."

Anyway, the point is, next time you're reading the sports section and you're about half-sick of DUIs and beaten wives, put it down for a second and remember Joe Delaney, who, in that splinter of a moment, when a hero was needed, didn't stop to ask why.

PRACTICE THE WAY YOU WANT TO PLAY

The following is an excerpt from an article entitled "Heroes and Defining Moments: Rosh Hashanah and 9/11" from The Center for Sport and Jewish Life. The entire article is worth reading at: <http://www.csjl.org/articles/article89-HeroesandDefiningMoments.htm>

"What we accomplish in life, our pursuits, our passions, echo in posterity through our children, our neighbors, and in our souls."

Tom Burnett (United Flight 93 Hero)

"The thing holding me together is knowing the person Todd was on his easy days was the person he was on his hardest day," said Lisa Beamer of her husband, a passenger of Flight 93. Many Americans learned that the same thing is true of the fire fighters and other first responders who rise to the occasion day after day, as so many of them did on that fateful morning. It is a quality shared by the best in all walks of life. Michael Jordan, the consummate athlete and as fierce a competitor as there is, was known for showing as much intensity in practice as on game day. How different the attitude shown by someone like Allen Iverson, a gifted athlete, but one who sneers at practice as something for other people.

How different the attitude of the corporate leaders who, like Iverson, scoff at the rules they consider beneath them. Leaders of Enron, Tyco, Worldcom – pampered executives cashing in on millions in stock options to build luxury homes and indulge their fancies while their own employees saw their retirement savings vanish. Different, indeed, from the spirit of self-sacrifice that moved firefighters to rush into the burning towers of downtown Manhattan to save lives while all about them were rushing out of those same buildings. Unlike some over-indulged athletes and captains of industry, these modestly paid civil servants embodied the loftiest qualities of the human spirit. These were America's heroes on September 11 and in the days that followed.

The experience of (concentration) camp life shows that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples of...men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

Man's Search for Meaning, by Victor Frankl,
(Psychiatrist and Concentration camp survivor)

"Time to step up to the plate," is how Todd Beamer had put it.

In 1995, Aaron Feuerstein stepped up to the plate when the largest fire in Massachusetts history destroyed his textile mill. At age 70, he could have accepted \$300 million in insurance money and retired to a comfortable life, or rebuilt overseas, where labor costs are far cheaper. But he spent the \$300 million and borrowed another \$100 million to rebuild the mill, insuring that his 3,400 employees would keep their livelihood. Taking the additional step of paying his workers their salaries for two months after the fire, to the tune of \$25 million, Feuerstein came to be known as The Mensch of Malden Mills. "I think it was a wise business decision, but that isn't why I did it," he told *Sixty Minutes'* Morley Safer. "I did it because it was the right thing to do. And what would I do with the money? Eat more? Buy another suit?" Quoting the Torah in Hebrew ("Lo ta'ashok sakhir – You shall not take advantage of the laborer in need" Deuteronomy 24:14), he explained. "You are not permitted to oppress the working man because he's poor and needy, amongst your brethren and amongst the non-Jew in your community."

In his introduction to the book *Lionhearts: Heroes of Israel*, a profile of fighters who gave their lives in service to Israel and the Zionist cause, editor Michael Bar-Zohar dedicated the book

...to the spirit of the fighters, to the qualities of volunteering, self-sacrifice for one's fellow man, utmost courage and nobility, without which a nation cannot exist. In these present days, characterized by the pursuit of material wealth, the preference of private interests over public ones...we should remember that terms like "patriotism," "sacrifice" and "courage" are not just empty slogans but the expression of noble qualities and feelings of which one should be proud.

In a speech he gave to the employees of his company shortly before his death, Tom Burnett, one of the heroes of Flight 93, said: "What we accomplish in life, our pursuits, our passions, echo in posterity through our children, our neighbors, and in our souls."



Sixteen years later, Jim Valvano continues to inspire...

Written by Joey Whelan

<http://www.slamonline.com/online/college-hs/college/2009/12/first-take-jimmy-vs-legacy/>

After some careful consideration I decided I would be remiss not to talk about Jim Valvano in the wake of another Jimmy V Classic doubleheader at Madison Square Garden.

I will be recapping games and events throughout the season, so to take one day, one column to talk about such an influential individual seems like the obvious thing to do.



"Cancer can take away all of my physical abilities. It cannot touch my mind, it cannot touch my heart, and it cannot touch my soul."

I've watched Valvano's famed speech given at the 1993 ESPY's more times than I can remember. I watch it every year at this time during ESPN's broadcast of the event and I know I've watched it dozens of times on YouTube. I can recount all the famed excerpts in my mind almost verbatim and every time I hear them I always react the same way – I stop and think. It gives me perspective. In a world that has become so cynical, so angry, so pessimistic in the face of terrorism, war and economic crisis, Valvano's words stand to show that no matter how dire a situation may seem, there is always something to be grateful for.

Here was a man staring death right in the face, knocking on its front door, and yet on the night that he announced the creation of the foundation that bears his name, he spoke with the fervor of a person with the world at their feet. And for that night, maybe Valvano had the world at his feet. In a room filled with men and woman recognized the world over as some of the most accomplished athletes on Earth, individuals praised for their physical ability and toughness, there was a middle aged man barely capable of climbing a flight of stairs bringing the room to its feet and bringing tears to their eyes.

It was classic Jimmy V, hamming it up with the audience telling stories of his comical first encounter with his Rutgers team during the early stages of his career. There was the loveable audacity to call out ESPN's time keeper for trying to count him down off the stage in the midst of his stirring speech. Ultimately, when it came time to send the message home, he did so with a force that continues to resonate with the kind of power that is hard to give proper due in the written word or any other form.

The Jimmy V Foundation has raised over \$90 million for cancer research and in doing so has taken Valvano's legacy to almost mythical proportions. Few speeches in the history of sports have gone beyond the boundaries of the playing field in such a profound manner.

Few acts in basketball's long and colorful history have resonated with so many. Willis Reed's dramatic entrance onto the floor of the Garden in Game 7 of the 1970 NBA Finals inspired his teammates and the fans of New York. Michael Jordan and Nike inspired our nation's youth during the early 90's. Valvano inspired a movement.

Growing up I can remember taking part in Jimmy V Shoot-a-Thon's with my town recreation league. Each player asked friends and family to donate a flat sum of money or a certain amount per free throw made. I doubt any of us even knew who Jim Valvano was at that point, but his name and his dream inspired action even at that age. We were helping people, we were fighting a terrible disease, even a pre-adolescent is going to understand the significance of that.

So rare are those who have the power and the fame to make a difference on the scale that Valvano has. A little over 70 years ago Lou Gehrig claimed he was the luckiest man on the face of the Earth in the wake of his terminal illness that goes by his name. More than five decades later, Jimmy V showed us we should all feel that way and not just once in a while, but every day.

We learn as children that many of the values we take from playing sports can be applied to our lives – Valvano exemplified this. He lived his life with the same zeal, the same passion that he coached with. He fought cancer with that passion until the day he died. His message has lived on with that same fire.

Am I any different from the countless writers who have written about this speech and what it has done in the 16 years since it was delivered? Of course not. Does this column provide an insightful message that is going to change people's appreciation for Jimmy V? I'm not cocky enough in my abilities to think so.

On a day when people are remembering a great man and the legacy he has left behind, I chose to voice my appreciation. Game scores and recaps, those can be put aside for one day; they can be read about elsewhere on the web or in the paper.

Jim Valvano was blessed with the power to deliver a message greater than himself and greater than basketball. His choice has resonated beyond the game, beyond his being and made the kind of impact that is reserved for legends and heroes – a label very fitting of the coach.



A buzzer beating alley-oop gave Valvano and the NC State Wolfpack the 1983 National Championship.

MOTHER TERESA'S FEET

Shane Claiborne, who spent a summer in the slums of Calcutta with Mother Teresa, wrote the following about one of his experiences:

People often ask me what Mother Teresa was like. Did she glow in the dark or have a halo? She was short, wrinkled, and precious, maybe even a little ornery--like a beautiful, wise old granny.

But there is one thing I will never forget—her feet were deformed. Each morning during Mass, I would stare at those feet. I wondered if Mother Teresa had leprosy. But I wasn't going to ask, of course.

One day a sister asked us, "Have you noticed Mother's feet?" We nodded, curious. She said, "Her feet are deformed because we get just enough donated shoes for everyone, and Mother does not want anyone to get stuck with the worst pair, so she digs through and finds those. Years of wearing bad shoes have deformed her feet."

That is the kind of love that places our neighbors' needs above our own.

MOTHER TERESA LESSONS

Mother Teresa visited Australia. A new recruit to the Franciscan order in Australia was assigned to be her guide and "gofer" during her stay. "Thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close to this woman, he dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, the friar never had the opportunity to say one word to Mother Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet.

Finally, her tour was over, and she was due to fly to New Guinea. In desperation, the friar spoke to Mother Teresa. "If I pay my own fare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane so I can talk to you and learn from you?" Mother Teresa looked at him. "You have enough money to pay airfare to New Guinea?" she asked. "Oh, yes," he replied eagerly. "Then give that money to the poor," she said. "You'll learn more from that than anything I can tell you."

"The greatest glory of a free-born people is to transmit that freedom to their children."

William Harvard

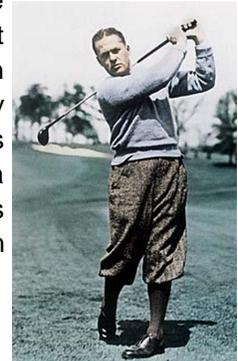
"If silence is ever golden, it must be beside the graves of fifteen-thousand men, whose lives were more significant than speech, and whose death was a poem the music of which can never be sung."

James Garfield

Setting an Example is Par for the Course

Before Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, and Arnold Palmer, there was Bobby Jones. He won 13 major golf tournaments. Early in Bobby Jones' amateur career, he was in the final playoff of the 1925 U.S. Open at the Worcester Country Club. During the match, his ball ended up in the rough just off the fairway, and as he was setting up to play his shot, his iron caused a slight movement of the ball. He immediately got angry with himself, turned to the marshals, and called a penalty on himself. The marshals discussed among themselves and questioned some of the gallery whether they had seen Jones's ball move. Their decision was that neither they nor anyone else had witnessed any incident, so the decision was left to Jones. Bobby Jones called the one-stroke penalty on himself, not knowing that he would lose the tournament by one stroke. When he was praised for his gesture, Jones replied, "You may as well praise a man for not robbing a bank." The United States Golf Association (USGA)'s sportsmanship award is named the Bob Jones Award in his honor.

Excerpt from Wikipedia



"And I'm proud
to be an American,

Where at least I
know I'm free.

And I won't forget
the men who died,

Who gave that
right to me."

Lee Greenwood

*This month's issue is devoted to celebrating and remembering just a few of the countless examples of sacrifice, inspiration and unselfishness that have touched lives and made the world a better place. We will celebrate Memorial Day at the end of this month. Though it is primarily designed as a time for remembering our armed forces and those that have died protecting our freedoms, it is also a great reminder that we all have had people in our lives that have demonstrated an example of how to live. I hope that you enjoy **THE ENCOURAGING LEADER**.*

Jamy Bechler

It was not Welles Crowther's job to save anyone's life on September 11. He worked for Sandler O'Neill and Partners on the 104th floor of the South Tower as an equities trader. At about 9:00 in the morning, he was on the phone in his office. His body would be recovered from the lobby along with NYFD firefighters. Having worked as a volunteer firefighter as a teenager, when disaster struck, Welles Crowther sprung into action.

They sat bloody and petrified — the lights out, smoke engulfing the room and pain searing through their bodies. There was no escape from where they were in the South Tower, in pieces after being hit by United Airlines Flight 175 as far as they could tell.

Then out of nowhere, a young man burst in and took control. In a strong, authoritative voice, he directed them to the stairway — which was veiled by darkness, wreckage and haze — telling the injured to get out and the healthy to help them down.

"I see this incredible hero, running back and forth and saving the day," recalled Judy Wein. "In his mind, he had a duty to do — to save people."

"He's definitely my guardian angel — no ifs, ands or buts — because without him, we would be sitting there, waiting [until] the building came down," echoes Ling Young.

Wein and Young were separated by a few minutes and a few floors that day, but they share a similar story and a single hero: Welles Crowther.

Both women credit the equities trader and volunteer firefighter with saving their lives and dozens of others on September 11.

Crowther has been credited with saving at least 18 lives that day, if not more. One of the people he helped escape, Ling Young, keeps a framed photo of him in her home. He exited and entered the building at least three times, helping evacuate trapped victims. He ultimately perished when he entered the building one last time before it collapsed with other firefighters, making their way up the South Tower with the "Jaws of Life" to free more people. His body was recovered March 19, 2002.

Welles Crowther was an investment banker, not a firefighter or a police officer. He could have easily just exited the building and got himself to safety with no shame whatsoever. Instead, he found the courage to go above and beyond what was required of him, helping many people out of the tower and saving countless lives.

You can find this article and other heroes of 9/11 at <http://hotair.com/greenroom/archives/2010/09/11/5-heroes-to-remember-this-september-11/>



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