

Memorial Program, Flight 5191

President Capilouto
UK/Lexington Arboretum
August 27, 2016

Good morning. I was not of you ten years ago when hearts were wounded and darkness came.

I was barely here a month, five years ago when this memorial was unveiled, glittering in the sun, reflecting light taking flight against an unseen wind. Rekindling in hearts, extinguished flames.

Today, I am humbled to welcome you to this place of memory, serenity, and beauty on behalf of the University of Kentucky, who, with our city, is a proud custodian of these grounds made sacred five years ago.

We're reminded in Psalms that sorrow endures for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Ten years ago, our community was awakened by terrible tragedy. In the quiet of morning, this family, in an instant, was torn asunder. Forever changed and left with a permanent void that can't be filled.

Those 49 names are our parents and grandparents ... husbands and wives ... brothers and sisters ... kids and grandkids. They coached for our children's soccer and baseball teams, they were our colleagues at work, parishioners in our faith groups... they were our friends, our neighbors.

And in the days that followed, you were left with grief as you grappled to understand why and how something like this could happen.

The next day wasn't the same for any of you ...or for this community. It changed our city.

It wasn't easy to see then, but in the terrible ripple of change we learn to find acceptance. Not closure, but acceptance and the will to move with; not move on.

Sherri Mandell, a mother who lost her children in a terrorist attack in Israel reminds us that there is "no closure...only disclosure;" that victims' families "don't move on. They move with. With the memories. With the pain. With the love. And with the will to survive and bear witness."

This community is moving with.

Included in the 49 was one of UK's own, Larry Turner, who was really known across Kentucky in his capacity as the Director of our Extension Services. A testament to his notoriety, affection, and commitment to others, over 1,000 people attended this humble man's memorial.

His son, Clay, in eulogizing his father and responding to the overwhelming outpouring of community support said, “I hope that God can give me strength so that someday my own kids can say the same thing about me.”

Larry was a man of faith. And while faith in and strength from our Creator – however defined – is powerful, today is evidence of the strength we give to each other.

I have noticed, families who suffer loss are often the first to help others.

Whether our grief stems from horrific terror in a city in Orlando, or a natural disaster in Louisiana or Italy, or from an August morning in Central Kentucky, our individual and collective strength comes from each other.

No matter the source, it can turn our grief turns into goodness.

And the memories you carry offer a sense of immortality for the friends and family you lost.

As we let the grace of memory shine through us, we honor them, and in doing so, make our lives better here.

We move together, with a shared strength that Clay Turner asked for all of us. That we yearn for. That we give to each other to make this a remarkable community. Thank you very much.