

The designer's inspiration and vision for the design of the 911 Memorial:

Back in 2004 I accepted the offer when asked by the City of Marshall if I would be interested in putting together some concepts for a memorial incorporating a 911 World Trade Center (WTC) steel beam and 3000 victim names. A meeting was set up for an on-site visit to review the original site at the Fire Station and the steel beam.

I knew as soon as I saw the beam and discussed with Craig Schafer (along with Marc Klaith and Ron Halgerson) his vision for the project, I wanted to at least have an opportunity to put together some ideas for a memorial. I have to admit that I was not that excited about the original tight site with the chain link fence and many trees to work around at the Fire Station, but many times you have to work with what you have.

When I first saw the beam on the dolly in the fire station and I ran my hand over it, unusual thoughts ran through my head. It was as if I was at a viewing for a person who had just passed away. That image stayed with me during my drive back to Chaska. The other images that surfaced very quickly were:

- * The peaceful beautiful sunny day
- * The first news of a plane crashing into the WTC
- * The planes circling in and taking aim on WTC
- * The impact and explosion
- * The fire, smoke and debris falling
- * The people jumping
- * The collapse of the towers
- * The smoke and dust
- * The fear, helplessness, disbelief,
hopelessness and despair

These images became more vivid in my mind over the next months as I started to put pencil to paper in January of 2005. How was I going to incorporate these images and elements into a memorial and art form that would tell the story of the tragic event in a meaningful and respectful way? My goal was to create a place that would be special, pleasant to visit, walk through, pause, sit, and reflect. Over the last 6 years the original concept has remained intact, but circulation patterns and easy access around the beam was improved as we moved the memorial from the Fire Station to this location called Memorial Park.

The final design of the 911 Memorial includes various elements that represent, or are symbolic of, the events of that tragic day in September 2001. Some are subtle and may not be obvious unless explained or brought to your attention.

I wanted the elements to help tell the story of the day. **A place** to honor those who perished, and also to honor local firefighters and police who use their lives to protect us each day; **A place** to reflect on the event; **A place** to explain and educate our younger generation about the events and how it has changed our lives and the lives of people around the world and **A place** just to sit or stroll through.

I wanted to use durable materials that are native to the region and would stand the test of time.

We wanted the soft landscape to provide year-round green and flowers to provide color during the summer season and help make it feel alive, bright and happy. Tragic things will happen, but we must look to a brighter day and new life. That is easier said than done for many, but I feel that plants do that as they emerge anew each spring and display an array of colors of both foliage and flowers.

The elements:

The WTC 911 steel box beam is the primary piece of art work placed at “ground zero” and is the center focal point of the Memorial set on the main North/South Axis. The beam is designed to lean toward New York City at approximately 1-2 degrees off of vertical to create “visual tension” and a sense of instability and question by the viewer. The symbolism being that we live in an unstable world. We want a perfect and peaceful world. We all know that is difficult but worth striving for.

The Circular forms represent community, coming together for one cause and for support.

The Spiraling large limestone blocks – There are 10 large stones plus the firefighter sculpture making a total of 11 elements. The 11 elements represent the 11th day of September. The firefighter sculpture is the 11th element and on the 11th day some of the firefighters gave their lives trying to save lives and structures. (The two WTC towers that were part of the New York skyline appear as the number **11**).

The increasing heights of each stone represent the days and months of discontent in our world that led up to this tragic event. The 11 stones are also laid out on a spiral line, and if continued (imaginary line) it would eventually circle around and come in contact with the beam. This is to represent the image that many of us have imprinted on our minds as we watched the aircrafts circling around and zeroing in on the Twin Towers prior to impact.

The stone blocks are smooth compared to the split face surface of the seating walls. This was done to provide a contrast in texture and surfaces and for possible future quotes or credits to be inscribed. The shapes and forms were also intended to add a subtle suggestion of tomb stones and final resting place. (The limestone blocks are from the Mankato/Kasota stone quarry in Mankato, MN.)

The 20” high curving limestone seating walls – The architectural element forms the space, and provides seating for the user. The walls keep stepping back from the center of the 911 Memorial Beam. This was done to represent what happens when you drop a pebble into water and the ripples move away from the center. The pebble was dropped at “ground zero” on 911 and the ripples moved out around the world and have changed our lives forever. (The limestone blocks are from the Mankato/Kasota stone quarry in Mankato, MN.)

The floral pattern on the paving surrounding the base of the Metal Beam – The floral pattern or flower is to represent new life and healing. The floral pattern has 9 petals representing the 9th month of the year and also the 9 letters in the word September.

The 3000 pavers with Stars.....

61 Police
343 Red stars for Firefighters
2596 Black stars for Civilians

The colored stars represent each person that lost his or her life on September 11th, 2001. The star was selected because we felt it was a strong symbol to represent each victim. (This was not in any way implying that the victims name is not important or special.) We also would like the STAR symbol to imply that each victim was a **STAR** in the eyes, minds, and hearts of their family and loved ones.

(The concrete pavers “bricks” are made of colored concrete and were manufactured by Borgert products in St. Joseph, MN.)

The Apples on the metal Beam base – The apple cut outs represent the “Big Apple” for New York City.

The “Bleeding Jasper” stone – The 3-foot wide band of black stone with the red veins symbolizes the charred and burnt debris and steel that remained after the fires were extinguished and the smoke and dust had settled. The red veins in the stone represent the blood shed on that sad day.

(The “Bleeding Jasper” stone is from the Minnesota Iron Range.)

Firefighter Sculpture was donated by a local family and is incorporated into the Memorial as a key element to represent all the firefighters, police and emergency personnel who put their lives in harms way to protect us each day.

We hope your visit has been meaningful and informative. Thank you.

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