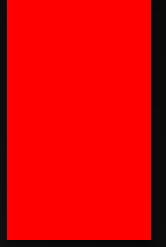




# 9/11 MEMORIAL

RECOLLECTION OF 9/11 AND BARTRAM TRAIL HISTORY OF  
THE "V FOR VICTORY" STATUE.

**September 11,  
2001**



**The World Trade Center Twin Towers were hit by two Boeing 767 air planes, resulting in the collapse of both lower Manhattan buildings.**

**The terrorist-led attacks caused the loss of more than 2,800 souls and affected the lives of countless others.**





**February, 2002**

An aerial photograph of the Ground Zero site after the September 11 attacks. The image shows a vast field of twisted metal, concrete, and other debris. Numerous workers in safety gear, including hard hats and high-visibility vests, are scattered throughout the site, engaged in various activities. The overall scene is one of a large-scale recovery and cleanup operation.

**Bartram Trail High School social studies teacher and Young Republicans Club sponsor, Bill Blythe, and YR president and student, Mark Minor, learned of the opportunity to request a piece of steel from Ground Zero.**

**Minor wrote a letter to Frank McClaron, a deputy commissioner of the New York City Office of Emergency Management, requesting a steel remnant from the Trade Center debris.**

**May, 2002**



**McClaron responded affirmatively to Blythe and Minor, approving the request to select a segment of the towers. The requirements were that the piece be personally picked up and not used for profit.**



**Saturday,  
May 18, 2002**



**After borrowing a Pick-up to carry the steel, three Bartram Trail employees left Jacksonville 30 minutes after that year's graduation ceremony. Aboard for the trek were Jim Springfield, Principal of Bartram Trail High (2000-2002); Eddie Ponce, BTHS Maintenance Coordinator (2000-2006); and Barry Craig, BTHS Athletic Director (2000-2014).**

# Monday

# May 20, 2002



The trio arrived in New York City



**Tuesday Morning,  
9:00am, May 21, 2002**



**The BTHS "selection delegation" stood on the edge of Ground Zero, looking over the two-acre field of steel beams and rubble before them.**

**Workers on site escorted the three to a pile of crumpled steel to select the ideal segment for the memorial..**

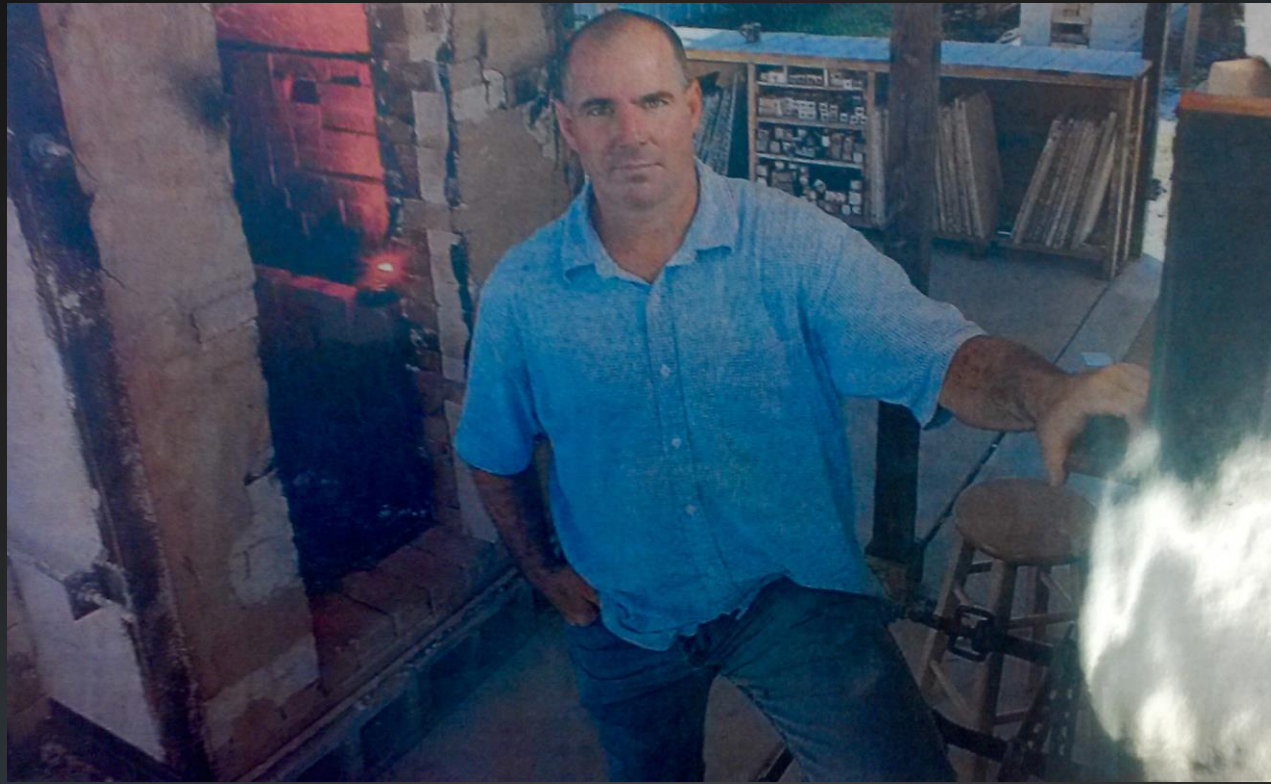


**After a 30 minute search among the debris, Springfield, Ponce, Craig, and a workers found a 700 pound I-beam that had once supported one of the towers.**

**Before the three left Ground Zero, a priest from Albuquerque, NM blessed the metal beam.**



**May – June, 2002**



**Once back in St. John's County, the beam came into the hands of Bartram Trail High School art teacher Bob Kirk, already an accomplished sculptor. In his skilled hands, the 6-foot beam, warped by heat and stress, would take on a new life. As he later commented about his vision, "I wanted the reality of the tragedy and what took place" to be offset by the "strength of rebuilding."**



**With that in mind, Kirk created a noble, unpretentious "V" shape that juxtaposed the rusty, bent I-beam on one side with a shiny stainless steel box beam on the other side. The 6-foot long twisted beam was in stark contrast to the gleaming, unyielding, pristine silver section. It would be a powerful image for all.**



**Between June and  
September, 2002**

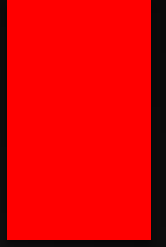
**With the sculpture construction underway, a suitable footing and pedestal had to be planned and constructed. The footing would need to support the 3-ton structure. The finished sculpture would be located in the school courtyard.**

**Michael Fixel, a parent volunteer, designed and created the 4-foot tall block pedestal, adding more height and dignity to the memorial sculpture. Another volunteer, structural engineer Jeff Hulsberg, worked with Fixel to draft a support system of steel rebar and concrete.**



**Once back in school, to create the footing, several students excavated the ground, installed the steel rebar, hand-mixed the donated concrete, and poured concrete on wheelbarrow after another for two hours. Once the form was filled, those students put their handprints around the base so they could always be part of e memorial.**

**September 11,  
2002**



**The now-10-foot tall memorial sculpture remained covered from view. Over 2,000 spectators on hand were eager to see the final product, realizing that this remnant of the World Trade Center was one of only 73 pieces of the towers that were acquired by non-profit or memorial groups, the only one in Florida, and believed to be the only piece in an American high school.**



**Students gathered around the courtyard that was draped with the stars and stripes, gazing down at the draped sculpture with anticipation. Everyone at BTHS and the community wanted to be a part of the auspicious occasion and solemn ceremony.**

**\* The ASL class performed the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**\*The St. Johns County Sheriff's Color Guard presented the colors.**

**\*The Spirit of Bartram Band played the National Anthem to accompany student Chelsea Willbach, Miss Bartram 2001, who lost her uncle in the 9/11 attacks.**



**Patrol Squad 30 out of NAS Jax performed a fly-over, making three circles over the BTHS courtyard. The Navy squad featured a P-3 Orion anti-submarine and reconnaissance aircraft.**

**\*The two people responsible for initiating the effort to secure the relic, Mr. Bill Blythe and Mark Minor, were the ones to remove the covering, unveiling the monument dedicated to the remembrance of September 11, 2001.**



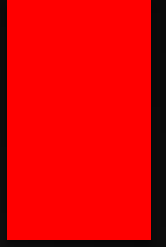
## **Honored guests were**

- **Retired New York City police officer ,Mr. Robert Crystal, who presented a pair of boots he wore while working at ground zero to Gov. Jeb Bush. As the crowd rose for a standing ovation, he asked the crowd to “stay strong. Please don’t get complacent. We have to face the darkness so we can see the light.”**
- **St. Johns County School Superintendent Hugh Balboni said of the memorial, it is “a testament to the power of freedom.”**
- **Florida Gov. Jeb Bush told attendees to “remember not only those who lost their lives but also those protecting us in places that we can barely pronounce.”**
- **To carry on the governor’s point and honor those American service people who serve and have served, every year on September 11, Mr. Blythe surrounds “The Victory Sculpture” with hundreds of American flags.**



- **To carry on the governor's point and honor those American service people who serve and have served, every year on September 11, Mr. Blythe surrounds "The Victory Sculpture" with hundreds of American flags.**
- **These symbols of America around the base of the sculpture call attention to a plaque with a quote from Pres. George Bush. "Terrorist attacks . . . cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."**

**September 11,  
2012**





**Bartram observed the 10 year anniversary of the memorial sculpture. Noted visitors were Bob Kirk, Mr. Springfield, Mr. Forson, SJC Schools Superintendent Dr. Joseph Joyner, and Mark Minor. The BTHS AFJROTC, now a part of the school curriculum, presented the colors and Spirit of Bartram Band Drum Major Amanda Rorabaugh played "Taps" on the trumpet. Minor's sentiments of pride, humility, and patriotism at the original 2002 ceremony were still present among the crowd.**



**As the sculpture ages, it was noted by a Bartram Staff member that the rust moves into the ground and becomes even more a part of Bartram.**

**The Victory sculpture has gone on to mean “Victory over Terrorism”, “Values of Citizenship and Unity”, and “Vision and Remembrance”. As our world and circumstances change, the ideals that make America strong do not change.**

## At a glance by the numbers:

- Weight of the I-beam: 700 pounds
- Length of the I-beam: 6 feet
- Height of the completed memorial sculpture: 10 feet
- Weight of the completed memorial sculpture: 3 tons



PowerPoint created by Devon Diaz, BTHS Student of the 2016 graduating class.