

## Remarks of Chairman John C. Whitehead

November 19, 2003

Two years ago, on September 11, 2001, our nation and our world faced one of the darkest hours of our history. In the aftermath of such devastating loss, our elemental humanity – our compassion, our fortitude, and our hope – held fast. Indeed, it was this very humanity that was attacked, this humanity that drove hundreds of first responders into the burning towers, and this humanity that inspired the innumerable known and unknown acts of bravery in the towers that day. Later on, it was this humanity that shined in the rescuers atop the World Trade Center pile who worked tirelessly to recover their brothers and sisters. And it is this humanity that has guided us to where we are now, an important step closer to the creation of a memorial that honors the heroes we lost that day.

Never before has a memorial competition produced so great an outpouring of creative ideas – five thousand, two hundred and one submissions were received from 62 countries. Amid the thousands of deeply moving, lovingly crafted designs, our thirteen jurors spent thousands of hours, well beyond the call of duty, meticulously examining and evaluating. Let me thank all of the jurors for their selfless, tireless work: Paula Grant Berry, Susan Freedman,

Vartan Gregorian, Patricia Harris, Maya Lin, Michael McKeon (pronounced McKuyme), Julie Menin, Enrique Norten, Martin Puryear, Nancy Rosen, Lowery Stokes Sims, Michael Van Valkenburgh, and James Young. These jurors looked within themselves, and at the world around them. They undertook marathon sessions and engaged in intensive deliberations – and from that process they selected eight finalist designs.

The remarkable humanity that has fueled our progress reveals itself perhaps most profoundly, most touchingly, in these finalist designs themselves. Their vocabularies are elemental – their designs draw upon the elements of light, water, earth... and life itself. With these simple yet profound elements, these eight teams have each crafted a unique place for us to contemplate, reflect, and seek our own peace with the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Some of the designs stretch the guidelines we initially provided to applicants. But, notably, the guidelines themselves maintained that if a proposal exceeded the original limits with a well-conceived purpose, and with well-executed results, it would be considered. So we consider them today.

The jury – and the jury alone – will select one of these eight plans for the memorial. Let me praise the members of the jury for their wisdom and openness – for their decision to reveal the designs to the public before making their final selection. The LMDC Board, the victims’ families advisory council, and the memorial mission statement and program drafting committees each previewed the finalists yesterday, and today the designs will be fully unveiled to the world.

Let us collectively contemplate these plans – and let us consider them with all due care. In the exhibit hall here at the Winter Garden – and, for that matter, within the virtual exhibition on the Internet – as you turn from one proposal to the next, please take your time. There are many nuances worthy of close consideration. And, as you view the designs, take a step back. Let us consider how these plans honor our heroes and loved ones, the two thousand seven hundred fifty-two (2,752) men and women taken from us on that fateful day. Let us ponder not only what the designs mean to us now, but also what they will mean to our children and grandchildren. Generations to come will see the memorial as the reminder that America was attacked but not bowed and heroes were lost but not forgotten.

There is much left to do. The jury has already spent many more hours on this project than I had initially promised. Once the jury has

completed its work, the selected memorial design and the Libeskind master plan must be integrated with one another – providing us finally with a complete, combined plan for this place formerly torn asunder. Then we must move forward to turn the unified plan into a reality at the World Trade Center site – and we must do so with the same vigor and commitment that have gotten us to this point.

Thank you to Governor Pataki, Mayor Bloomberg, and the LMDC Board for your guidance and leadership in this effort. Thank you also to the Families Advisory Council – and all of the families – for your countless contributions to this process and for drawing upon a limitless reservoir of strength on our behalf. And let us express our gratitude to all those who submitted proposals to the memorial competition. You have animated this process with five thousand two hundred and one (5201) ideas – and you have offered us five thousand two hundred and one (5201) affirmations that this site and this community can truly be whole again – that we can literally and figuratively fill the final void.

To close, let me remind this gathering of remarks given on this very date – but in another time and in another place. On November 19, EIGHTEEN sixty three (1863), Abraham Lincoln dedicated a national cemetery at the site of a Civil War battlefield known as Gettysburg. If I may take the liberty, I would like to excerpt from Lincoln's timeless

address – which has been invoked multiple times since September 11<sup>th</sup> but which never loses its potency. On that day in Gettysburg precisely seven score – or 140 years – ago, Lincoln looked out from his platform to the crowd before him, looked beyond that gathering to the acres of land surrounding them, and looked into his heart to reflect upon the history and future of our nation. And he said: “We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. ... It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

As we view the memorial designs today, let us invoke this same spirit – let us honor those we have lost and let us also resolve to reaffirm the principles that are the core of our city, state, and nation.

Now, let me introduce a distinguished representative of the memorial jury, Dr. Vartan Gregorian, President of the Carnegie

Corporation of New York. Vartan will offer a statement on behalf of the jury.