

President Russi

September 11 Remembrance Remarks

September 11, 2006

Kresge Library

Good morning. Five years ago it was a clear, beautiful morning. None of us will ever forget the stark contrast between the peaceful morning sky and the destruction that we all saw taking place in those twin towers that once proudly touched that sky. All of those lives lost. So much tragedy in the midst of such beauty.

Here in Rochester, even though we are far away from Ground Zero, it's important that we as a community stop and remember September 11, 2001. Even though we may live far from New York City and much time has passed since that day, we need to remember the day our nation lost so many loved ones.

Many of them were so young and just beginning their careers and their families. Many of them were not much older than our students here at Oakland. You all remember where you were on this day five years ago. This tragedy changed each and every one of us. It caused us all to pause. As a community and as a nation, we grieved.

And after we could catch our breath, we thought of all the people that are important in our lives, and how thankful we are to have them, how thankful we are to be alive. We looked at our lives with a new perspective. We embraced our neighbors and became a stronger community. As I spoke at a memorial service on September 12, 2001, I asked the university community to come together to share our thoughts and feelings.

We may have no answers, but the very act of talking and listening can help us heal our wounds. And I will take the opportunity again today to ask you to try over the course of your lives to make this world a better place.

Through education comes greater awareness, mutual acceptance and understanding of the differences that can divide us.

As we reflect on the ongoing terrorism around the world we feel an even deeper appreciation for the men and women in our armed services and those who serve as first responders to protect our way of life.

We can all learn from these tragic events and celebrate the good that can come from a shared effort to make a difference and a positive change.