I begin with a quote from Thomas Jefferson:

I know of no safe repository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

One year ago our lives changed: dramatically, drastically and forever. On that day, terrorists — without a country, without clear boundaries, not playing by anyone’s rules but by their own tactics — attacked our country.

On this day, forever, we will remember.

We will remember lives lost — tragically. Men and women, who simply rose in the morning, donned their clothes, kissed their children, spouses, friends, petted their dog and went to work. Janitors, CEOs, dining hall servers, accountants, firemen, pilots, travelers, and vacationers: in the midst of routine life, nothing was routine.

Massive, senseless suffering interrupts. It must not be forgotten. Its only redemption is our resistance to forgetting, our attempts to make it never happen again.

On this day we will remember.

The New York Times has remembered. One by one the stories have appeared: Kate, she loved potatoes, her poodle and swing dancing; Joe lived in New Jersey, he liked to fish, bowl and hang out with his buddies; Sharim, a grandfather, had worked in the towers for eleven years and in his spare time worked at his church.

They may have perished together, but each one died alone.
We remember those of our Colgate family who died on September 11, 2001:

Nestor Cintron ’96

Scott Coleman ’94

Edward Potter Felt ’81

Aaron J. Jacobs ’96

Todd Pelino ’89 (husband of Megan Pezzuti Pelino ’89 and cousin of Joe Burkett ’03

David Retik ’90 (husband of Susan Zalesne ’90)

Sharon Balkcom ’80

Daniel SantaMaria, cousin of Ana Calle ’05

Richard Rosenthal, cousin of Rachel Deblinger ’02

Michael Hardy Edwards, son of William Edwards ’52 and brother of Christopher Edwards ’93

Amy Jarret (flight attendant on United Airlines flight 175), stepsister of Brian Lemek ’02

David Rathkey, husband of Julia Wilcox Rathkey ’84

Father and uncle of Doug Halvorson ’94

Kaleen Pezzuti, sister of Megan Pezzuti Pelino ’89

Francis Noel McGuinn, brother of Ed McGuinn ’73

Robert Cruikshank, father of Christina Cruikshank ’91

Edmund McNally, brother of Lydia McNally Danenberg ’84

David Brady, brother of Scott Brady ’88

Jon Vandevander, brother-in-law of Sarah Tarvin Thurston ’89
On this day, forever, we will remember: our fear of what will happen; our fear that normalcy will never return; our fear that more will happen; our fear for family and friends and strangers in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania; our fear that no one was safe anywhere. To taste that fear — not uncommon in many parts of our world — was new for us in many ways. We joined the world that day in new, unforgettably tragic ways.

On this day, forever, may we remember that we survived by clinging to one another. Across this country, in colleges, in businesses, in mosques, synagogues, churches: Americans reached out and the bonds of the community held our fears, caught our tears and kindled our hopes.

I have only read and heard of what occurred at Colgate. I know best from President Pinchin’s powerful words in the *Scene*:

> I have spoken to this community before about the nation’s, the world’s, tragedy, reading on a gloriously sunlit day from Walt Whitman’s “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom,” his tribute to an assassinated Lincoln, to whom he sends a sprig of lilac, and reading the next day at the candlelight vigil from another great American poet, Wallace Stevens, “After that no there comes a yes, and on that yes, the future of the world depends.”

Colgate gathered as a family that day, those days, the family weekend. As President Pinchin expressed: “The Colgate University I thought I knew took one step further and became a family.” Our response in the face of tragedy has been to form new bonds of commitment to one another.

The power of community, of being in common with those around us, does not solve, fix or address the terrible tragedy. But comfort, compassion and hope arise in human solidarity, where together we grieve and together we begin to imagine again.
On this day, forever, may we remember: In the fear, rage, terror, grief, we also reached out to each other and down deep to our country’s soul; and remember that democracy is important, the loyalty still beats in our hearts and that civic engagement is a tradition worth retrieving.

Some years ago, a friend, Harvey Khler, taught a freshman seminar on loyalty. His students found it a strange concept when applied to politics, though more familiar in friendships. Loyalty was something that many thought was forgotten on the American psyche. Deep reservoirs were tapped. I know and understand that “loyalty” is itself a contested term and one person’s expression of loyalty may be another’s act of treason. And yet loyalty is the feeling that binds persons to their countries and it is, I think, a cultural emotion worth noting. Because we also remember a series of events in the twenty-first century we must not celebrate loyalty merely for itself, as a feeling. Like personal relations in which love must be good for you, loyalty too must produce the good citizen. So the stirrings of our feelings of loyalty must lead, I think, to understanding democracy anew and embracing civic engagement.

Today we meet to underscore what President Pinchin said so powerfully one year ago with the words of Wallace Stevens: “After that no there comes a yes, and on that yes, the future of the world depends.”

Our focus today — as a way of remembering that turns to hope and where loyalty is to deepen and broaden the common good — is to address how liberal arts education renews our civic democracy. Perhaps now, as never before, the words of Hannah Arendt ring true:

Basically we are always educating for a world that is or is becoming
out of joint, for this is the basic human situation, in which the world is created by mortal hands to serve mortals for a limited time as home. Because the world is made by mortals it wears out; and because it continuously changes its inhabitants it runs the risk of becoming as mortal as they. To preserve the world against the morality of its creators and inhabitants it must be constantly set anew. The problem is to educate in such a way that a setting aright remains possible. (“The Crisis of Education”)

Of course, as Arendt herself understands, the link between democracy and education is not a modern invention. In the Greek and Roman traditions, education and citizenship went hand in hand. Young men, with the appropriate conditions for citizenship, were cultivated in the virtues, arts, or excellences, so that they might live a life of virtue in the polis, the city-state. Rhetoric, the basic communication skill of democracy, was required so that deliberation and debate could flourish. Please note that this democracy was not, as is that of the United States, open and equal to all by birth.

Education and citizenship have traveled throughout the history of the United States. As historian Thomas Bender has shown, America’s earliest institutions of higher learning were civic and public. Across this country, colleges — such as Harvard and Colgate and Duke, and much later Stanford — were founded so that men could be trained for public and church life. So important was training leaders for civic society, a point of great pride was to have a college or an academy. The Morrill Act, a land grant of 1862, extended the notion of education for democracy to rural and agrarian culture. The progressive movement extended education to immigrants in our cities. And the special link between historically black colleges and African-American communities ensured that training for those denied citizens, who would soon be in the republic as fully engaged citizens. A simple statistic: between 1870 and 1940, the U.S. population tripled but the
number of students in colleges increased thirty times — America has depended upon higher education to strengthen civic society time and time again.

In recent years, the fundamental role of education — preparation in practices for democracy — has both eroded and been shoved aside by the notion of education as preparation for a profession on the one hand, and education as the institution of pure research on the other. We can save analysis for those two aspects for another day: Both should be envisioned in new ways to further the aims of this democracy; but out of perspective they distort the promises and functions of education.

Historians of education note that America’s unique contribution to education is not that of the research university but that of the liberal arts college. Most fully in America have we realized the goal of education for citizenship and life in general. Liberal arts — alone among the forms of higher education in this country — has clung tenaciously to civic education as a fundamental purpose. Thank Goodness. For from this strong and deep foundation of democracy this country may again retrieve the formation of citizens as a basic goal of higher education.

Within the top liberal arts institutions, Colgate has a particular responsibility and opportunity. Colgate is, in a sense, a liberal arts university with the depth of liberal arts and the breadth of university; the interconnectivity of liberal arts combined with the microscopic focus of the research university, which can be utilized to shape new ways to engage the civic public. Last year, coincidentally, the Center for Outreach, Volunteerism and Education (the COVE) was established to help America create healthy communities that meet the multiple needs of all people and to create an activated citizenry of community builders who are committed to democracy. The COVE represents as much as
it realizes Colgate’s commitment to addressing the renewed responsibility for civic engagement. The COVE, the Center for Ethics and World Studies, and Peace Studies join various leadership programs on this campus in training the skills of democracy. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recognizes Colgate as a leader in civic and political engagement. But these special programs depend upon the web and work of a liberal arts university education that provide the formation of judgment for the world in which we live. Three aspects are central to our task:

1. **Literacy in science, humanities, the arts and social sciences.** Citizens of tomorrow, engaged on the world stage of technological, economic and environmental change, need to be able to acquire information about images of humans, about facts of human culture and about the natural world. For this, they have to have a basic literacy of the concepts and practices of thinking and expression in what we know as the liberal arts.

2. **Fluency in bridge building, connecting, world traveling and communications.** In our contemporary world, this means attending to methods and ways of connecting knowledge, learning different cultures and relating and managing information. The pragmatics called for literacy in these arts and fluency in the scientific method, by which they mean the openness of inquiry, the communal character of deliberation, the willingness to submit hypothesis for public deliberation, the imagination required for successful practice. (Bernstein, 265). Training for democracy calls for a revision of this “pragmatic” method and its application in a worldwide context.
3. *Moral imagination of commons in context of world, formed out of traditions, but adept at new day, new issues, new problems.* Here, history, religion, philosophy and art teach us past cultures and how they addressed the problems of their day. Anthropology, psychology and political science must teach us about the current conditions and ways to model change. We use the traditions, as Hans Georg Gadamer has noted, for new interpretations, new visions and new practices. We have waffled in recent years in relation to this task, careful to not offend, unsure of how to talk about morality without offending, ill at ease with public debates. But we must use our bonds of community to remember forward, to imagine new paths of working together, new images of being human together, new conversations of and in our democracy.

Today we remember. But we remember as an act of not only grief but also of hope, hope in democracy, in civic engagement and in the necessity and promise of education. We act in hope, an act upon which the future depends. Thomas Jefferson understood democracy required education, and John Dewey understood that real education led to democracy.

In 1939, Dewey gave a talk at a conference held to honor him on his eightieth birthday. The talk was entitled, quite simple, “Democracy — The Task Before Us.” In this talk, Dewey identifies various threats to democracy: fascism, Stalinism and communism. But Dewey suggests that the greatest danger was that democracy was internally threatened by the failure of intellectual formation and engagement and the rise of what he called “corporate mentality.” Dewey called for intellectuals and education to be engaged; to shape the citizens of tomorrow through the education of today. I end with
Richard Bernstein’s fine summary of Dewey’s address, asking us to take seriously, as a way to commemorate 9/11/01, education for democracy as the task before us:

For what is most enduring in Dewey is his sanity and his courage, his refusal to submit to despair. Dewey did emphasize the projective and future-oriented dimension of all thinking, and he was aware of the ways in which history and tradition are always effectively shaping what we are in the process of becoming. But his central focus was with the living present, with facing our present conflicts and problems with honesty and imagination and with finding the concerned ways in which we can reconstruct experience where free communication, public debate, rational persuasion and genuine sharing are integrated into our everyday practices. Creative — radical — democracy is still “the task before us.”

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