



Brigadier General James C. McConville
Deputy Commanding General (Support)
101st Airborne Division

Families and Friends of our Fallen Heroes we honor today, Dr Mariano, fellow veterans, distinguished guestsGood morning, I am proud to say I am a 1977 graduate of Archbishop Williams and I am proud to serve with 24,000 Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division whose HQs has just returned from a 15 month tour in Afghanistan and whose Soldiers are presently preparing for their 5th Combat tour to Iraq and Afghanistan, but I especially proud and honored to be part of this ceremony where we honor those from our High School who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country.

There are some people today who say we have no heroes... Or they look for them on golf courses, on playing fields, or in theater halls...My heroes are those who serve others before themselves, those who serve our great country....and especially those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in its defense. Soldiers like CPT Bill Hingston, SGT Michael Barry, and SGT Dan Londono, Sailors like LT Paul Grafton, and Airmen like LT Paul Pedranti and LT Bob Ryan. We seldom get the opportunity to choose how we will die... but we do get to choose how we live and how we serve. Each of these great men chose to attend Archbishop Williams High and each of these men gallantry chose to serve their country at time when it was at war. Each of them chose to put others before themselves. Each of them left families and friends at too young of an age.

Though I regret that I did not know each of these men personally, I know many men like them. I can promise you that none of them wanted to leave their families or friends, none of them wanted to get shot at and none of them wanted endure the harsh conditions of combat. Yet they did it because they understand the importance of defending this great country of America and the freedoms we all enjoy daily.

I would like to offer a special thanks to the families of our fallen heroes for the sacrifices you have made and the losses you have endured. None of you chose to lose your son, your husband, your father, your brother, you sister your loved family member. I wish I could find the words that would bring comfort to you or ease your loss. I can only tell you that we are proud of their service and grateful for their sacrifice as well as yours, what they did was important, what they did made a difference. Thank God we have people like them.

I hope and pray that Danny Londono will be the last name added to this monument. But I am afraid that as long as there is evil in this world and there are irreconcilable terrorists that threaten our families and national security and want to take away the freedoms that we enjoy every day, brave men and women will have to answer the call to duty. This Memorial in the front of our school honors those heroes that have answered this call. Hundreds of thousands of brave men and women have given their lives to protect our way of life and we must never forget their sacrifice. Let us not forget these heroes; let us not forget that the freedoms we enjoy daily have been protected on the battlefield by these great men. They epitomize bravery and sacrifice; they personify what it means to be American. We have lost six of our finest in LT Paul Grafton, CPT Bill Hingston, LT Paul Pedranti, LT Bob Ryan, SGT Michael Barry and SGT Dan Londono, but the legacy of freedom that they defended so dearly shall live forever. God Bless them and all our Fallen Heroes.

*Speech given by Brigadier General James C. McConville

At the Archbishop Williams High School

Memorial Dedication Ceremony for Our Fallen Heroes

June 13, 2009