

ARCHBISHOP WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL

Our Fallen Heroes

Dedication Ceremony
June 13, 2009

Carmen Mariano, Ed.D.
President

Thank you Mary Lou and thank you everybody.
Welcome to our special school on this special day.

We are here to celebrate the lives and to mourn the loss of six fallen heroes.

Their names have been written into many hearts and into many memories for many years.

After today, those names will be written somewhere else.

Yes, after today, the names of the six heroes who graduated from Archbishop Williams High School and then gave their lives in service to our country will be written into the legacy of our school forever.

We are here to dedicate a beautiful and everlasting memorial that will forever bear the names of Our Fallen Heroes.

It is truly an honor for me to host this ceremony.

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This special day will have many special moments.

The first of those moments will see our colors posted and our flag lowered by members of Braintree's Veterans Council, American Legion Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled Veterans.

Sergeant at Arms, Charles Moore.

Ladies & Gentlemen, please stand.

Please remain standing for the singing of our National Anthem by Kelly Marshall, a very generous and very gifted graduate of Archbishop Williams High School.

Thank you, Kelly – and thank you, veterans – you were perfect.

Please remain standing, while a special priest will ask God to bless this special day.

I welcome and thank Reverend Richard Erickson the Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Archdiocese of Boston.

Father Ericson is himself a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a member of the United States Air Force Reserves.

Thank you father for your words and for your service.

Please be seated – everyone.

In a moment, we will hear from our two key note speakers, and more. Before we do, let share a special story – on this special day. And like all my stories, this one is.....true.

Shortly, after my mother died four years ago, I asked my dad if he would like to come and live with my wife, Dee Dee and me.

He said, “No, I am fine living alone. I can take care of myself.”

“Ok,” I replied, “you know best. But what can I do to make things easier for you?”

“Just two things,” dad replied.

“What are they?” I pursued.

“First, come to visit me when you can,” he said.

“Of course,” I promised, “What else?”

Dad paused, then answered, “Come because you want to; not because you have to.”

My father never went to college; but he was a genius.

He knew that having my body visit him meant nothing; and having my heart visit him meant everything.

After that day, I never visited my dad without bringing my heart.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you all came here today bringing your hearts.

Many of you did so from a great distance.

Yes, you all, in your own way, feel the loss of the men whose names we honor and those memories we cherish; and you found a way to honor those names and cherish those memories with us.

There are other important places you could be.

Instead, you are here; because this ceremony on this day was too important to miss.

Please be proud of that; and please know how proud we are that each of you and all of you are with us on this day and for these men.

Speaking of proud, we are proud that our ceremony will feature two keynote speakers.

Both of them are heroes themselves.

Our first speaker will be introduced by a Dean of Students at Archbishop Williams and himself a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United State Marine Corp.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Mr. Dan Tarpey.

Thank you Colonel Smyth.

Our second speaker will be introduced by our school's Assistant Principal and himself a retired Colonel in the US Army Reserves, Mr. John Goff

Thank you General McConville.

In a moment we will welcome the words of other special speakers. But first, let me tell you one last – I promise – last, true story.

Once upon a time, I had the pleasure of teaching overseas.

I was part of a program that sent part-time college professors like me to American schools all over the world to offer courses to the people teaching in these schools.

Each course lasted two weeks and was taught during school vacation.

It was a great program and every time I traveled, I learned more from my students than they ever learned from me.
I also learned how hard it was to leave home.

I mean, each time I left, I was only going to be away for two weeks; and I was going to a school to teach; not to a jungle or desert to fight.
Still, it was hard to leave.
When Dee Dee and I said good-bye at the airport, we cried every time I left.

The two men who just spoke to us have said much harder good-byes to their families than I ever have to mine.
And they said those good-byes for us.
They have said those good-byes to keep us free.
Their families have missed them – worried about them – and prayed for them – and they did that for us, as well.

Ladies & Gentlemen, on our behalf, I thank General McConville, Colonel Smyth, and anyone else with us today who has ever said good-bye to their family to serve our country and to keep us free.

Veterans and anyone here on active military duty, please stand – or wave – and let us thank you – let us applaud you.

Others have words to share on this special day.
They have come to speak for our state, our town and beyond.
We thank them all and welcome their words.

First, the Mayor of the Town of Braintree, and a close friend to Archbishop Williams High School and to me.
His Honor, Joseph Sullivan.

Next, the Mayor of Quincy; hometown to two of Our Fallen Heroes and to one of our speakers, Mayor Tom Koch.

Next, our district's State Representative to the Massachusetts great and general court and a graduate of Archbishop Williams High School, Mr. Joseph Driscoll.

Now if you would all please stand, and remain standing for the rest of our program, the time has come to unveil our memorial.

It will be done by two of our current students;

Ian Mulhern and Katherine Dunford

They represent not only all of the students who attend our school now; but all of the students who will ever attend our school.

Because they all will hear of this day.

Yes ladies & gentlemen, from this day forward, every student who attends our school will hear of this day.

And from this day forward, every student who attends our school will see this stone.

And from this day forward, every student who attends our school will read these names.

Lieutenant Paul M. Grafton, U. S. Naval Reserve
Class of 1955

Captain William E. Hingston, U.S. Army
Class of 1958

First Lieutenant Paul J. Pedranti, U. S. Air Force
Class of 1959

First Lieutenant Robert E. Ryan, U. S. Air Force
Class of 1965

Sergeant J. Michael Barry, U. S. Army
Class of 1968

Sergeant Daniel J. Londono, U. S. Army
Class of 2000

A rifle salute will now be executed by the Braintree D.A.V. American Legion, followed by the playing of taps by Major Daniel Kelly, USAR.

May Our Fallen Heroes continue to rest in the peace that they protected for with their lives.

Father Erickson will now offer our Benediction.
Then Kelly will lead us in God Bless America.

I will now ask our veterans to retire the colors.
After they do, Ian and Katherine will usher the families of Our Fallen Heroes past the memorial into the gym so we can join each other in something to eat and sometime together.

God bless our Fallen Heroes – God bless you all - and God bless America.