

ROBERT J. FRANK ACADEMY

Academy of Marine Science and Engineering | Oxnard School District
701 North Juanita Avenue | Oxnard, California 93030 | Phone (805) 385-1536 | Fax (805) 981-1754

FRANK ACADEMY MEMORIAL QUAD FLAG COMMITTEE

September 18, 2026

Juanita Gray
Director, Community Engagement
Office of Government and Community Relations
University of the District of Columbia
4200 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ms. Gray,

On behalf of the **Frank Academy Memorial Quad Flag Committee** and the Robert J. Frank Academy community in Oxnard, California, we would like to share with you how we commemorated the **25th anniversary of September 11, 2001**.

On the morning of September 11, 2026, members of our school community gathered in the Frank Academy Memorial Quad for a special flag-raising ceremony. At **6:37 a.m. Pacific Time**, corresponding with the time American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon, we raised our memorial flag and remembered by name the eight travelers whose journey was intended to bring them to our community.

Among them were **Asia Cottom** and educator **Sara Clark of Bertie Backus Middle School**.

They, along with fellow Washington, D.C. students **Bernard Brown II** and **Rodney Dickens**, educators **Hilda Taylor** and **James Debeuneure**, and National Geographic Society members **Ann Judge** and **Joe Ferguson**, were traveling to California to join students and teachers from our Oxnard community for an educational expedition to the Channel Islands.

They were supposed to be our guests. Our school was waiting for them.

Twenty-five years later, that connection remains important to us.

Enclosed are copies of our **25th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony booklet, remembrance photograph, and ceremony script**. We wanted to share them with you so that those connected with the former Bertie Backus Middle School community would know that Asia and Sara continue to be remembered here in Oxnard.

Their journey never reached California, but their connection to our school has never been forgotten.

With respect and remembrance,

Frank Academy Memorial Quad Flag Committee
Robert J. Frank Academy

We will remember. We will honor their memory.

Enclosures: 25th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony Booklet; Remembrance Photograph; Memorial Ceremony Script

IN REMEMBRANCE

They were coming to Frank.



James Debeuneure
Educator



Hilda Taylor
Educator



Asia Cottom
Student



Rodney Dickens
Student

We remember.
We honor.
We will never forget.



American Airlines Flight 77 • September 11, 2001



Bernard Brown II
Student



Ann Judge
National Geographic Society



Sara Clark
Educator



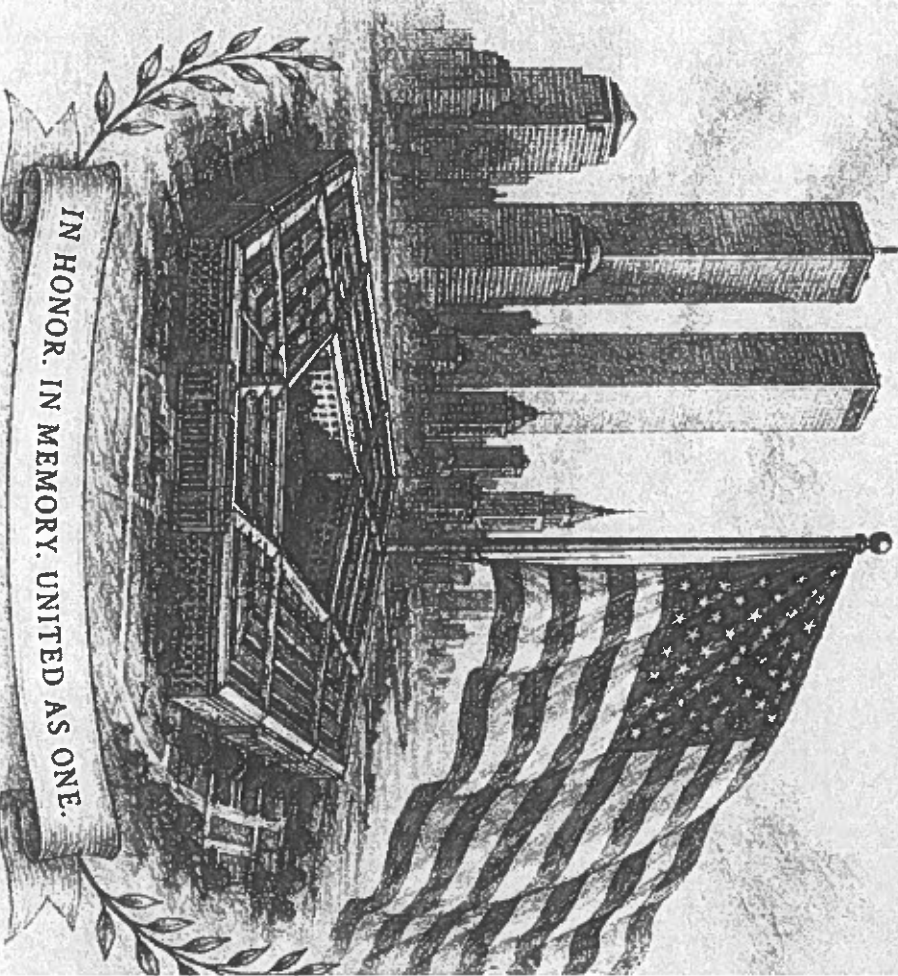
Joe Ferguson
National Geographic Society

ROBERT J. FRANK ACADEMY

September 11 Memorial Ceremony

25th Anniversary — September 11, 2026

6:30 a.m.



WE WILL REMEMBER

Their journey was intended to bring them to our community in the spirit of education, exploration, and friendship. Twenty-five years later, Robert J. Frank Academy continues to honor their memory.



September 11, 2001 — Never Forget

ORDER OF CEREMONY

— ♦ —
Welcome & Opening Remarks

— ♦ —
The Frank Academy Connection

— ♦ —
6:37 a.m. — Raising of the Memorial Flag

— ♦ —
Reading of the Names

— ♦ —
Students

Asia S. Cotton

Bernard C. Brown II

Rodney Dickens

— ♦ —
Educators

Sara M. Clark

Hilda E. Taylor

James D. Debeuneure

— ♦ —
National Geographic Society

Ann C. Judge

J. Joseph Ferguson

— ♦ —
Moment of Silence

— ♦ —
Closing Reflection

THE FRANK ACADEMY CONNECTION

— ♦ —
On September 11, 2001, three teachers, three students, and two National Geographic Society representatives boarded American Airlines Flight 77. They were traveling to Oxnard to join students and staff from Robert J. Frank Academy and other local schools for an educational expedition to the Channel Islands.

— ♦ —
They were to explore, learn, and share in the spirit of education, discovery, and friendship. Their journey ended when Flight 77 was crashed into the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. Eastern Time.

— ♦ —
Because they were coming to our community, their memory holds a special place at Frank Academy. Each year, we honor their lives and remember the enduring connection they have to our school.



— ♦ —
September 11, 2001 — We Will Remember

Robert J. Frank Academy September 11 Memorial Ceremony

September 11, 2026 - 25th Anniversary

Good morning, and thank you for joining us.

We gather here this morning to remember September 11, 2001 - a day that changed our country forever.

For Americans everywhere, September 11 is a day of remembrance.

But here at Robert J. Frank Academy, it also has a very personal connection.

Twenty-five years ago today, three teachers and three sixth-grade students from Washington, D.C., along with two representatives from the National Geographic Society, boarded American Airlines Flight 77.

They were traveling west to California.

They were coming to Oxnard.

Their plan was to join students and teachers from our community for an educational expedition to the Channel Islands.

They were coming here to learn, to explore, and to share an experience with students just like the students who walk our campus today.

They were supposed to be our guests.

They never arrived.

At 9:37 that morning in Washington, D.C., American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon.

Among those aboard were three educators:

Sara Clark.

Hilda Taylor.

James Debeuneure.

Three 11-year-old students:

Asia Cottom.

Bernard Brown II.

Rodney Dickens.

And two members of the National Geographic Society:

Ann Judge.

Joe Ferguson.

Eight people traveling together in the spirit of education, exploration, and friendship.

Their journey was supposed to bring them to our community.

That is why their memory holds such a special place here at Frank Academy.

Our school was waiting for them.

Our community was preparing to welcome them.

And twenty-five years later, we continue to remember them.

This morning, we also remember all those who lost their lives on September 11.

We remember those at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

We remember the passengers and crews of the four aircraft.

And we remember the firefighters, police officers, military personnel, emergency responders, and ordinary citizens who showed extraordinary courage that morning.

For many of us, September 11 is a memory.

For the generations that have come after us, it is history.

That makes ceremonies like this important.

Memory survives because one generation takes the time to tell the next:

This happened.

These people lived.

Their lives mattered.

And we will remember them.

In a few moments, at **6:37 a.m. Pacific Time**, we will raise our memorial flag in remembrance of American Airlines Flight 77 and all those whose lives were lost on September 11, 2001.

Before we raise the flag, we will listen to **"Amazing Grace," performed on the bagpipes.**

As the music plays, I ask that we remember the lives that were lost, the families who were forever changed, and especially the eight travelers who were coming to our community.

6:34 a.m. - Amazing Grace

[Play "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes.]

[6:36:30 a.m. - "Amazing Grace" concludes.]

[Remain together in quiet reflection for 30 seconds.]

6:37 a.m. - Raising of the Memorial Flag

As we raise our memorial flag this morning, we remember American Airlines Flight 77 and the lives forever connected to our school and our community.

[Begin raising the memorial flag.]

As this flag rises, we remember:

Sara Clark.

Hilda Taylor.

James Debeuneure.

Asia Cottom.

Bernard Brown II.

Rodney Dickens.

Ann Judge.

Joe Ferguson.

[Pause briefly after the flag reaches its position and the color guard has completed its duties.]

May this flag remind us of those who were lost, of those who served, and of the enduring connection these eight travelers have to our school.

Twenty-five years later, Robert J. Frank Academy continues the promise:

We will remember.

We will honor their memory.

And we will never forget September 11, 2001.

We will now conclude our ceremony with "The Minstrel Boy," a song traditionally played in remembrance at FDNY and NYPD funerals.

[Play "The Minstrel Boy."]

[At the conclusion of the music.]

Thank you.

