

D.C. to compete in the national finals of the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program. This is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young people about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

I am proud to announce that a class from Grant High School in my congressional district will represent the state of Oregon in this national event. These young scholars have worked diligently to reach the national finals and through their experience have gained a deep knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The three-day national competition is modeled after hearings in the United States Congress. The hearings consist of oral presentations by high school students before a panel of adult judges on constitutional topics. The students testimony is followed by a period of questioning by the judges who probe the depth of their understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge.

Administered by the Center for Civic Education, the We the People . . . program provides students with a working knowledge of our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the principles of democratic government. It is inspiring to see these young people advocate the fundamental ideals and principles of our government in the aftermath of the tragedy on September 11. There are the ideals that identify us as a people and bind us together as a nation. It is important for our next generation to understand these values and principles that we hold as standards in our endeavor to preserve and realize the promise of our constitutional democracy.

The class from Grant High School is currently preparing for their upcoming participation in the national competition in Washington, D.C. I wish these young "constitutional experts" the best of luck at the We the People . . . national finals. They represent the future leaders of our nation.

---

**NEW YORK FIREFIGHTER'S TRIBUTE AT NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST**

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 12, 2002*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I was honored to attend the annual National Prayer Breakfast last Thursday morning, Feb. 7, and to hear the moving words of Joseph Finley, a member of Tower Ladder 7 of the Fire Department of New York, among the first responders to the World Trade Center on September 11.

I want to share his inspiring remarks with our colleagues, which includes the names of the heroes from his firehouse who made the ultimate sacrifice that fateful day.

In a letter to me, he called the prayer breakfast an "incredible experience" for his wife Maryellen and himself, but it was also "bittersweet." As he noted, "We wouldn't have been there to experience it if not for September 11th."

He also said, "It was inspiring and reassuring to see that the leaders of our nation

have a genuine devotion to God. I believe this will help make our great country an even better place for our children."

Mr. Speaker, Joseph Finley's remarks follow:

Mr. President and Mrs. Bush, it is an honor to be here with you and all of these distinguished guests. I am humbled and privileged to be representing the courageous firefighters of New York City. I am sad, however, for the reason for my participation. I wish that September 11th had never happened.

Prior to that tragic day, the greatest loss of firefighters at any one time in the entire United States occurred in 1966, when 12 firemen lost their lives in the 23rd Street Fire in Manhattan. My father, Lieutenant John Finley of Ladder 7, was one of them. I was 10-years-old.

When people run out of a burning building, we firemen run in. That's what we do. But none of us thought, when we joined the fire department, that we would some day be called upon to fight in a war—a war against terrorism.

For the New York City firefighter, there is an inconsolable wound in our hearts that will never heal. Three hundred forty-three of my "brothers" were murdered. Nine men from my firehouse are gone. We will never forget the evil that has been unjustly unleashed upon us.

When the Twin Towers collapsed, the Fire Department called in every single firefighter in the city. Thousands of us converged on the World Trade Center. Burning paper rained down, grit scratched our eyes, the thick smoke made us cough. Everything was covered in gray ash. The huge plume of smoke was mind-boggling. Our footsteps were muffled by the layers of dust and paper. There was an eerie silence. Who could imagine downtown Manhattan, in the middle of the day, with no one around and we were the only sign of life. The silence was beyond description. No sounds, no sirens, no survivors, just ash, flames and smoke. As we trudged through the wreckage, unable to speak, I literally thought the world was coming to an end.

It was surreal. There were no words to speak, except the prayer in my heart, which said "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us."

In the midst of that brooding silence and despair and the wreckage of the Towers—something absolutely amazing happened. Church bells started to ring all over downtown. And we realized that we were not alone. Those ringing bells became a poignant reminder of hope.

Our neighbor, the New York Yankees' Chaplain, has stopped by our firehouse almost every day since 9-11. He helped us to remember that we have been left with a great legacy of courage, faith, hope and love. Scripture says "greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friends."

One century ago, Edward Crocker, chief of the Fire Department of New York, said:

"I have no ambition in this world but one, And that is to be a fireman. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one;

But those who know the work which a fireman has to do believe his is a noble calling.

Our proudest moment is to save...lives. Under the impulse of such thought the nobility of the occupation thrills us and stimulates us to deeds of daring, Even of supreme sacrifice."

Mr. President, I was personally heartened by your own words when you said, "Grief and

tragedy and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance and love have no end."

As a child who lost my own father in the line of duty, I am here as proof that we can get through the anguish and the grief. By returning to the Lord, we will survive. With His help, we will prevail.

And now, an Old Testament reading from the book of Hosea, Chapter 6, verses 1 through 3:

"Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces But he will heal us; He Has injured us But he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; On the third day he will restore us, That we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the Lord; Let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, He will appear; He will come to us like the winter rains, Like the spring rains that water the earth."

Amen. Thank you.

The following men from my firehouse were among the 343 firefighters who made the supreme sacrifice on September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center in New York City:

Battalion Chief John Moran  
 Captain Vernon Richard  
 Lieutenant Kenneth Phelan  
 Firefighter George Cain  
 Firefighter Robert Foti  
 Firefighter Charles Mendez  
 Firefighter Richard Muldowney  
 Firefighter Douglas Oelschlager  
 Firefighter Vincent Princiotta

---

**TERRORISTS IN PHILIPPINES MUST RELEASE MARTIN AND GRACIA BURNHAM**

**HON. TODD TIAHRT**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 12, 2002*

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 262nd day that Martin and Gracia Burnham have been held captive by Muslim terrorists in the Philippines.

As we are riding Afghanistan of the notorious Taliban, let me introduce you to another organization that has been terrorizing the world and Americans since 1991.

The Abu Sayaf group, known as the ASG, is the smallest yet most radical of the Islamic separatist groups operating in the Southern Philippines. They have known ties to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda organization. Some ASG members have studied or worked in the Middle East and developed ties to mujahidin while fighting and training in Afghanistan. Activities of the group include bombings, assassinations, kidnappings and extortion payments to promote an independent Islamic state in the Southern Philippines.

ASG has been blazing a bloody trail of murders, abductions, rapes, mutilations, arsons, and other heinous crimes that is possible to match in terms of callous cruelty. I am pleased that we have sent troops to the Philippines who will advise their military. Together with the Philippine government we have an obligation to rid the world of these "evil does" and free our fellow Americans from this interminable nightmare.