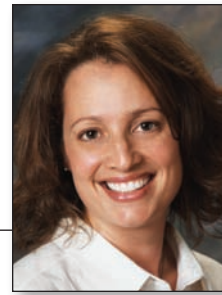


## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

# Pay This Message Forward



*By Melissa Hoff & Steve Conley*

### She Said

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2011 tragedy. Like all of us, I remember the events of the day clearly. Being on West Coast time, events were unfolding on the East Coast just I was waking up. I had moved with my husband to Seattle six months earlier to accept a new job at Cooley Godward and when I arrived at work, I joined my colleagues in the conference room to watch the television, stunned by what was happening in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania.

In the days that followed, like nearly all Americans, I watched more television news than I had before or since. I don't generally become too emotional about current events (even tragic ones), but I remember crying as I watched a young man desperately looking for news of his brother and telling the reporter, "His name is Anthony, but he goes by Tony. If people are calling out for Anthony, he might not know that you mean him, so be looking for Tony." There was something so heartbreaking to me about the desperation and the grasping at straws to find lost loved ones. It made an emotional impression on me that I can still summon to this day.

In the years that followed, I had the opportunity to work with people who had been directly impacted by Sept. 11. I had many relatives and college friends living in New York and along the East Coast, and for many, this event was a turning point. They began reassessing their priorities and some chose to relocate. Others didn't leave Manhattan, but they changed jobs and made other lifestyle changes with a newfound sense of urgency and fallibility.

On the anniversary of this date, as I watched a documentary about the events of that horrible day with my husband and our 9-year-old daughter, I thought about the healing process and what it means to recover from tragedy. As I watched the children of those who died, I was touched by the acceptance I saw on their faces. Not that they were no longer saddened, but they had made peace with what happened and with the indelible mark it left on their lives.

One thing is certain: Healing comes in stages. The beautiful new 9/11 Memorial is, to me, a great symbol of progress on that road of healing and assimilating that which is unthinkable. ■

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### He Said

BOULDER, Colo. – Sept. 11, 2011 – I remember wondering about colleagues in Cooley Godward's San Francisco offices, where a firm building in the Financial District stretched hundreds of feet, at least, higher than the 10-story one I was in Colorado, a stone's throw outside Boulder. I wondered what it would be like to evacuate from higher floors, if necessary, as many people we doing in New York on this date 10 years ago.

It was before Cooley had a New York office. It was before we gave detailed thought to exactly what was in our carry-on bags. It was before I stopped playfully calling my daughter a terrorist when she was teasing me.

But it was after I'd locked myself in the stairwell of a San Francisco high-rise, without a key card to get back onto one of Cooley's floors. I don't remember exactly how many floors I had descended a year or two earlier before arriving at an unlocked, ground-level door, but glancing out the windows of my Colorado office on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, I knew any steps New Yorkers were taking were terribly more burdened than mine had been.

I'd been able to laugh at myself. So many in New York never got that chance again. And so many working on upper floors in any building on 9/11 must have wondered what it was like in New York, even before the World Trade Center towers fell.

The Colorado office I was in was quiet, of course. The conversations brief, sometimes near televisions mounted above coffee bars on either end of the 9th and 10th floors. A Metro Denver business reporter called, but I think it may have been the day after the attacks.

I guess, maybe, we've always told time that way, before and after. But that morning was during.

Despite the busy regional airport nearby, I remember the eerie feeling as I watched fighter jets patrol Colorado's skies. There were no other planes. And, it seemed, even birds were not flying that day.

I remember a day filled with sadness, and loving thoughts of family and friends, colleagues and others — real key indicators to pay attention to and remember. ■

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