

**A CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE**

**9/11/2014**

**2:15 p.m.**

***American Women's Clubhouse – Johan van Oldenbarneveltlaan 43, The Hague***

**On a blue and golden Tuesday morning - September 11, 2001, 2,977 people from more than 90 countries - died. The oldest was 85; the youngest - two. Four hundred and forty-one were first responders.**

**The South and then the North Tower of the World Trade Center crumbled. A plane carved a massive gash into the Pentagon and another crashed into the green of a Pennsylvania meadow.**

**The news was non-stop! Unbelievable! Thirteen years later, it still is. We remember where we were, what we were doing, who we talked to, who we called.**

**Those who were here remember the mounds of flowers in front of the American Embassy on the Lange Voorhout and in the lobby of the American School. We remember how kids from the Adelbert College, next door to the American School, brought over 1400 white roses with little cards wired to each one. *“We didn't know what else to do,”* they said.**

**Recently, we watched the same scene play out again. We've seen mounds of flowers pile up in front of Schiphol Airport and little memorials all over The Netherlands. We've heard people talk to each other and ask if they knew someone and why did it happen. We've even heard them say, *“It's Holland's 9/11.”* *On another blue and golden day, a Thursday in July, 298 people from many nations – died – when a plane crashed into another meadow half a world away.* The Dutch Foreign Minister Timmermans said at the United Nations, *“The demise of almost 200 of my compatriots has left a hole in the heart of the Dutch nation.”***

**And so this year, when we commemorate 9/11, it will perhaps seem closer in time. These last weeks, our memories have been stirred and shaken. We have been saddened and witnessed sadness around us. Like our country, we have felt a nation in mourning and seen its flag sweeping low at half mast. Conversely, we have watched people behave with dignity, commitment and respect; in the words of David Halberstam after 9/11, *“the nobility of ordinary people.”***

**Each year on September 11<sup>th</sup>, OAR – Overseas Americans Remember hold a ceremony of remembrance, but more than that - of hope. *“It was the worst day we've ever seen, but it brought out the best in all of us.”* US Secretary of State, John Kerry.**

**Everyone is welcome to attend.**

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