

TITLE: Dedication of the Wildflower Memorial Garden

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VOLUME: 37 ISSUE: Summer YEAR: 1993

STUDIES IN INTELLIGENCE



A collection of articles on the historical, operational, doctrinal, and theoretical aspects of intelligence.

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A living tribute

Dedication of the Wildflower Memorial Garden

R. James Woolsey

The following remarks include those made by Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey on 30 June 1993 at the dedication of a memorial wildflower garden to honor the victims of the 25 January 1993 shootings that killed two CIA employees and wounded two others near the main Headquarters entrance.

The wildflower garden is on an embankment on the right-hand side of Route 123 coming toward CIA Headquarters from the George Washington Parkway. Ernest Berger, Fairfax County Dranesville District Supervisor, presided at the dedication. He took the lead in arranging for the memorial garden on behalf of area citizens and garden clubs and with support from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Mr. Berger opened the ceremony with the following remarks:

Today, I think we are going to have a splendid program. The heavens certainly cooperated, and I am just so grateful that all of you are here. Long before the tragedy that took place here last January, I had the idea that we would want to plant wildflowers throughout the Dranesville District. And, after the tragic events that took place here, several people came forward—many are here today—and helped me raise the money privately to plant these wildflower plots throughout the district. In the next few years, I think the entire district will absolutely bloom. But we have set aside this plot today and that is why we are here. So, thank you again, for coming.

(The Pledge of Allegiance was then led by Nicholas Starr, who was seriously injured in the shooting.)

Invocation

The invocation was then delivered by Reverend Jérôme Fasano of St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church in Great Falls, Virginia:

Creator of all that is beautiful today, we gather together fully aware that at times your will to surround us with the beauty of this world is sometimes frustrated by violence and hatred on the part of some of your children, who show no respect for your gift of life to us.

Nonetheless, as we gaze on this place, where the beauty of living things should serve to remind us of your gift of life itself, we are sadly reminded of those whose lives were tragically ended here. Each time we pass this place, we will be reminded of the martyrdom and suffering of individuals guilty of no crime but struck down for their dedication to the principles and security of this great nation which they sought to serve so faithfully.

We ask you who can even draw good out of evil circumstances to reward those who have suffered injustice and convert all hearts filled with hatred and bitterness which so cause the beauty of your creation to be obscured. Let this living memorial help us never to forget those who have died as these flowers serve to bring pleasure in the future to those of us who gaze upon them here; may the souls of those who have died bring pleasure to you in paradise throughout eternity.

Your will is not that we die, but that we live. As beautiful new life blossoms here from seeds in the ground that may appear dead to us, so may you raise up those who have been slain without pity or mercy to a new and eternal life. Enable us to find ways to put an end to the violence that robs your creation of its loveliness, and help us to learn that mercy and forgiveness are our powerful weapons in our struggle against evil, far more effective than the weapons held in the hands of our enemies.

Throughout our history, you have manifested your special love and care for all those who have suffered from violence, hatred, and oppression. We commend

Lansing Bennett and Frank Darling to the healing mercy of God who binds up all our wounds and enfolds us in his gentle care.

Deliver us, Lord, from those who do evil. Preserve us from all their criminal acts. Save us from those who devise evil in their hearts and stir up strife amongst us. Help us to learn that hatred can be overcome by love, and forgiveness of our enemies can heal us of our pain, and even move them to repentance. Protect each of us from the violence of others. Keep us safe from the weapons of hatred, and allow us to live in tranquillity and peace. May God bless us with His mercy, strengthen us with His love, enable us to walk in charity and peace, and grant eternal life and happiness to those who have been tragically taken from us. Amen.

Remarks by DCI Woolsey

Good morning. I'm Jim Woolsey, the Director of Central Intelligence. Last January, 100 yards from this spot, five of our colleagues were shot, and two were killed. Now, five months later, we are still searching for the killer, although we know who he was. And we all re-experience the shock, the outrage, and the sorrow of those moments when we

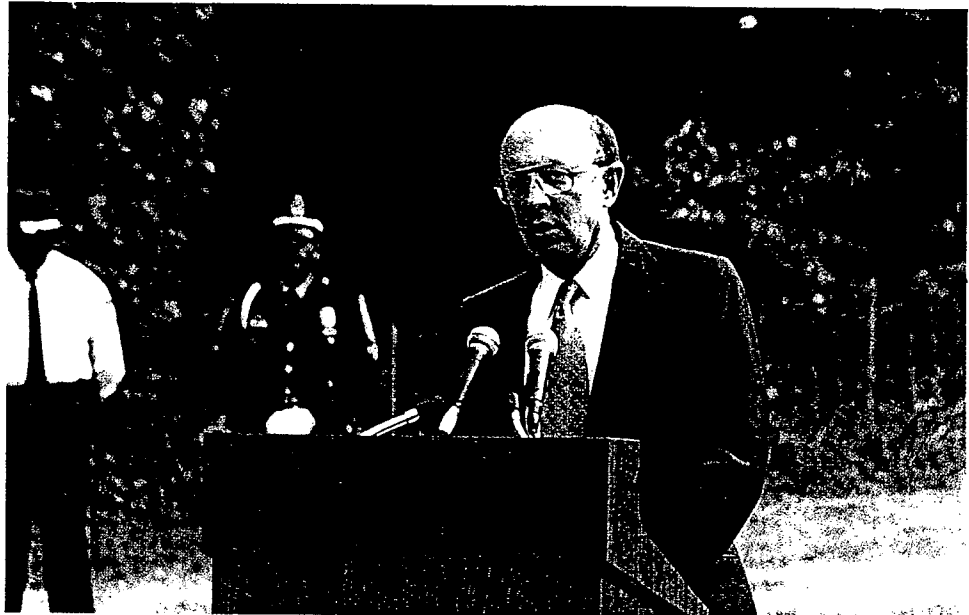
either witnessed or first heard of this tragedy, and we re-experience them particularly when we are driving by this intersection.

We continue especially to concentrate and to mourn the passing of Frank Darling and Lansing Bennett. They and their colleagues who were wounded were and are part of families that loved them deeply, and they were valued and treasured colleagues. But they also were and are part of a larger community here in Northern Virginia and in the United States. A community that shared their laughter and their lives.

It is now particularly fitting that this larger community has offered this extraordinarily apt and appropriate memorial. I especially want to thank Ernest Berger, Dranesville District Supervisor; the White Oak Nursery; Ed Mainland and the Virginia Native Plant Society; and Ms. Cherie, Ms. Staunton, and Ms. Haynes. Their actions and those of their friends and colleagues remind all of us that we are part of this larger community.

We who work inside these fences often think that not only does the outside world not know what we do but that it does not care. It is particularly lovely to be told in this way that we are not isolated and that we do have friends and appreciators on the outside

DCI Woolsey at the dedication ceremony.



Dedication

of the fence—people who recognize that the CIA is an important, vital part of the struggle in the world against terrorism and for democracy and freedom.

The frontlines of this struggle are now from time to time in the United States, and last January the frontlines were at this intersection. Frank and Lansing died, and Nick and Calvin and Steve were wounded in that struggle against terrorism because they worked for freedom. They were victims also in part of a different kind of weapons proliferation than that against which we normally struggle overseas.

Frank and Lansing, I am announcing today, that their lives and their sacrifice will be marked by memorial stars in the CIA lobby, along with those of their colleagues over the years who have given their lives in the cause of freedom. This garden, too, marks their and the other sacrifices in a wonderful way with color and flowers as the seasons pass. But most of all, we will mark their sacrifices and their lives in our hearts and in the work that we do continuing with what they have done. Thank you.

Additional Remarks by Ernest J. Berger

My dear honored guests, Mr. Director and friends. It is with a true sense of sadness that we gather here today. However, it is enormously important that we are here to honor in some small way the men whose lives were taken from us and those that were wounded here in defense of our nation. We, the community, and, indeed, the nation must understand that as surely as any soldier defends his country on the battlefield the events of last January are exactly the same.

The vital work that takes place in the building behind us here is rarely known, but our nation is secure and our people are protected as a direct result. The price of freedom, my friends, is constant diligence through intelligence and a strong defense. We must not allow anything or anyone to distract us from that goal. We do not live in a peaceful world, and there are always those who are bent on destroying our way

of life in this the greatest nation that ever existed.

This blatant act of terrorism which we remember today and this plot that we will dedicate in memory of Frank Darling and Lansing Bennett who lost their lives and to the other victims demonstrates clearly the price that we pay for our freedom. Nothing we can do or say will erase that tragedy that took place. But we can remember. Each time the community in general drives by and each time, Mr. Director, you and your colleagues, your fellow employees enter or exit these grounds, we will honor and remember.

As incredible as it seems, within these small seeds that we are going to plant here in a few minutes, there is an insatiable power to produce something living and to perpetuate itself forever. It is fitting then that we have chosen these wildflowers to help us remember.

The power of the seed to burst through any obstacle should remind us that we must be just as powerful in defense of this nation. The flowers themselves, each spring as they burst forth, will remind us once again of our intelligence heroes and the tragic events that took place here. Thank you.

Benediction

The benediction was given by the Reverend John Sonneday of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in McLean, Virginia:

Let us go forth now to give as God gives daily to us in the redundant beauty of woodland and flower. In the nurturing interaction of family and friends in the enriching privilege of a society democratic and free, may your memories of Lansing Bennett and Frank Darling continue to inspire your qualities of courageous living. May you be grateful for their lives lived, for their example of service to country, and for the assurance of life beyond life. And may all of our love of family, neighbor, and country ever be an expression of God's love for all humankind. Amen.