

On September 11, 2001, four terrorist attacks in the United States stunned citizens of every nation. As people around the world watched the Twin Towers collapse on television, the lives of thousands were altered forever. There were, of course, those who lost loved ones and those New Yorkers who lived or worked downtown and were directly impacted, as well as those who witnessed the day's events firsthand. There were also New Yorkers who chose to go to the scene of the crime to assist with the recovery and others who lent support and expertise in the days and weeks that followed the tragic events.

"Our alumni, like many members of the legal community, have contributed greatly since September 11," says Stewart E. Sterk, H. Bert and Ruth Mack Professor of Real Estate Law who was acting dean on that Tuesday. "It is a sign of the diversity of the institution that we have so many people who are able to serve the different needs that arose out of this tragedy," he adds.

Whether they were emergency medical technicians or police officers in their prior lives, or simply lawyers, Cardozo alumni lined up to offer their services.

By Victoria Rivkin



Haberfeld

I wasn't a welder, I couldn't give blood, and I couldn't do physical labor in the first few days," says Jacqueline Haberfeld '91. "I had a skill that was useful and I had to offer it," she says. So, Ms. Haberfeld wielded her lawyering skills like the pro she is and helped families quickly obtain death certificates for their loved ones in the aftermath of the attacks.

Ms. Haberfeld, a ninth-year Weil, Gotshal & Manges litigation associate, was recovering at home from emergency surgery and watching television helplessly in her Upper West Side apartment as the morning's events unfolded. "I was sitting in bed screaming. It was incomprehensible," she remembers. "It just as easily could have been my building."

She returned to work a few days later and saw an email plea for volunteer lawyers. Attorneys were needed to put together death certificates for people who lost a family member whose body had not been recovered. Without a body, the process usually takes three years. In this situation, where most bodies would never be found, thousands of families needed a death certificate for quick access to their loved one's insurance, bank accounts, and other property.

She responded immediately. On September 26, Ms.

Haberfeld arrived at Pier 94 where 80 lawyers were waiting to assist families. For three days, she worked day and night feverishly interviewing the many hundreds of people arriving at Pier 94 to fill out the necessary documents. According to Ms. Haberfeld, lawyers issued 900 death certificates in that time alone.

Ms. Haberfeld quickly became a senior expert on the job. She trained new volunteers not only in how to properly complete the paperwork, but also in how to speak with the bereaved.

Ms. Haberfeld credits the mediation training she received at Cardozo as critical, especially when meeting with families of the deceased. She describes the experience as heart wrenching and requiring a lot of diplomacy, sensitivity, and an acute ability to listen. These were the very skills that Ms. Haberfeld says she learned in the mediation clinic for minor criminal cases and as a litigator on the job.

After returning to Weil, Gotshal & Manges, Ms. Haberfeld went back to Pier 94 at night, even bringing her boyfriend to volunteer so they would be able to see each other. "I was in crisis overdrive," she says. "I put everything else out of my mind. The families needed us there and needed us to be strong."

**J**oseph A. Inzerillo '01, a first-year at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft, also went into crisis overdrive on September 11. This ex-New York City police officer was beginning his second day at his first job out of law school when he heard screaming in the firm's downstairs atrium.

Mr. Inzerillo's first reaction was to use the experience he had gained on the police force. Cadwalader, located only a few blocks from the World Trade Center, became a refuge amidst the dust and debris that had turned day into night when the Towers crumbled. Mr. Inzerillo spent the better part of the morning shuttling back and forth between the firm's headquarters at 100 Maiden Lane and its building at 125 Maiden Lane. He calmed people, reducing their fears, and just generally tried to keep order.

"I don't remember most of it. I was just working on autopilot," explains Mr. Inzerillo. "As a cop, you are taught how to keep your cool while others around you are panicking. So, that's what I did."

Although he had seen his share of tragedies as a police officer and was actually on the 23rd floor of the World Financial Center during the 1993 World Trade Center bombings, this experience greatly affected him and made him want to do more. A few days later he got Cadwalader to "adopt" Ladder 11, Engine 28 Firehouse, which lost six firefighters on September 11. The firm offered their families free legal services and invited their children to Cadwalader's children's holiday party. Mr. Inzerillo met with families to assess their legal needs and help them review benefits for which they are eligible. He also assisted them with issues such as probate and taxes. In addition, he did hours of research compiling information that became part of a handbook of public and private assistance resources for the victims and families of the World Trade Center attack.

**W**hile Mr. Inzerillo was able to return to his home in Queens in the late afternoon on September 11, his former classmate, Sarah F. Warren '01, couldn't return home for weeks after the attacks.

Ms. Warren moved to Battery Park City in August of last year to be close to her job as a litigation associate at Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson at One New York Plaza. That bright and warm Tuesday morning, Ms. Warren was in her pajamas editing an article for *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal*. Around 8:45 a.m. she heard a noise that she says sounded like an oil barge crashing. Soon after, from her 23rd floor apartment, which overlooks the water, Ms. Warren saw the second plane stream right past her window. Her entire



Warren



Inzerillo

building shook.

From her balcony she could see one of the Towers on fire and could almost feel the flames. Panic stricken, she quickly packed a small bag and headed to a nearby parking garage where her friend's car was parked. On her way to the car, she saw the unimaginable—people jumping from the buildings to escape the flames. As Ms. Warren and her friends prepared to drive out of New York, the first Tower collapsed.

Ms. Warren was not allowed back into her apartment for three-and-a-half weeks, except to rescue her cat. "I could not sleep or eat for weeks," says Ms. Warren, who was haunted nonstop by what she had seen prior to her escape.

When she received a memo that was sent to all Fried Frank lawyers asking for volunteers to help families with estate matters, Ms. Warren had reservations about responding. "I didn't know if I could handle it emotionally after what I had gone through," she says. But after attending a training session, Ms. Warren became one of the first associates to "adopt" a family—a mother of three who had lost her husband.

Ms. Warren soon became this widow's right-hand person, helping to obtain a death certificate, establish trust funds, settle life insurance policies, roll over accounts,

and research and apply for charitable funds. And her reservations quickly melted away as her own ordeal transformed her into an effective counsel to the family.

"Seeing people with more dire circumstances than my own puts things into perspective," she says. "When the work required me to be composed and strong for someone else, I realized I could do it. I learned that I was stronger than I thought I was."

In no time, Ms. Warren became the in-house expert at Fried Frank, assisting other associates with questions about charitable funds and basic trust and estate matters. "Our goal here was to alleviate the families' burdens so they can spend their time grieving and healing," she explains.

**D**onald Scherer '93 and his pregnant wife also found themselves homeless in the aftermath of the World Trade Center disaster. Forced out of their home in Battery Park City, the Scherers repeatedly called city officials and politicians to find out what was happening to their home and when they could safely move back in. But the answers were not forthcoming; their calls were rarely returned.

Mr. Scherer, who is the CEO of Crossborder Solutions, a

Scherer



software company he cofounded with his mother and sister, Stephanie Scherer '94, was not used to being ignored. So one night, he posted a message on a Battery Park City Internet chat board asking if anyone would be interested in forming a residents' association. Within minutes, hundreds of people responded with great interest.

Mr. Scherer formed the Battery Park City Residents' Association and became its first president. The Association's meetings attracted not only hundreds of angry residents but the media as well. Soon his phone calls were being returned and the politicians and government officials paid attention. Progress included a shuttle bus system, negotiations for lease-breakers, and streamlined identification of residents.

**W**hile Andrew D. Leftt '01 was not involuntarily caught up in the day's events, he chose to put himself right into the middle of the fray. This former emergency medical technician hitched rides on an ambulance and a fire truck to go from the Queens Supreme Court, where he was practicing that morning, to Manhattan.

This brand new plaintiffs' associate at David Horowitz P.C. in Manhattan headed to New York Presbyterian Hospital, where he once worked as an EMT. He grabbed some gear, a partner, and an ambulance and headed downtown. Forced to get off at Vesey Street, he walked the rest of the way until he came upon an abandoned ambulance with shattered windows. Its crew members, he later learned, had died. The ambulance started, so he drove further south, arriving within one block of the World Trade Center. There Mr. Leftt and his partner picked up people randomly—firemen, a father with a baby, and others who suffered mostly minor eye injuries, cuts, and bruises. After driving them to a makeshift hospital at City Hall, Mr. Leftt was not permitted back to Ground Zero.

He returned to the hospital and spent the rest of the day waiting in vain for rescued victims to arrive. The next morning he went to work at his law firm, and returned to Ground Zero every night that week. Mr. Leftt helped volunteers dig through the rubble in search of survivors and treated the injuries of those working at the site.

Mr. Leftt admits that it's been difficult since September 11. Those lost include four EMTs from his station and others that he knew. He has attended many funerals.

"It has made me and everyone I know feel less immortal than we once did," says Mr. Leftt. "If I did not start as a lawyer and was still with EMS, I might have been dead."

But this has not lessened his resolve to help. "I went

