



# *Hero* Ric Stafford

## *Glens Falls September 11th Memorial*

**Success Magazine: Ric, you have spearheaded the effort to build a September 11th memorial in downtown Glens Falls. Why are you dedicating your time to this?**

Ric Stafford: The events of September 11, 2001 changed all of us. The victims were no different than you and I...everyday people simply going to work, school, shopping, etc. On that day we saw the worst of mankind, but in true American fashion, we also saw the best of mankind. In the wake of those tragic events we witnessed renewed patriotism, great acts of heroism and selflessness, and a strong country of individuals who came together as one. We, as a nation, took a hell of a punch. True to our history and heritage, we got back up stronger. I was not in New York City or Washington DC on that fateful day, but the events changed my life.

**SM: How did the September 11th tragedy affect you personally?**

RS: I was never more patriotic than in the days following the attacks. I had to have a flag. I wanted to fly our colors with pride. I was in awe of the way our citizens came together. Before September 11th I had no idea what a real hero was. For me, the word conjured up an image of a celebrity; a famous Hollywood star. But on September 11th it became clear—the first responders running into the buildings to help, the everyday citizens who risked their lives, the people working on the recovery efforts...they are heroes.

**SM: How did it change our country?**

RS: On that fateful day, our nation of individuals exemplified one United States of America. I believe it forced us to take a hard look at our security and address important problems. We learned that we aren't invincible. And perhaps most importantly, we began to understand the meaning of "United we stand, divided we fall."

**SM: Why have you chosen to show your feelings through this particular avenue?**

RS: I knew it was my calling to do something...but what? I wanted to do something that our city could be proud of, something that would last forever. The memorial, in my eyes, is the perfect way to take care of three goals—remember, reflect, and educate.

**SM: What do you currently do for work?**

RS: I work as a carpenter for Hilltop Construction. Hilltop has a wonderful reputation for being supportive of community events and, true to their reputation, they have supported me whole-heartedly in this endeavor.

**SM: When did you become interested in the arts; particularly public works of art?**

RS: I have always been interested in architectural drawing. Having the ability to see a project on paper and make it come to life is truly a gift. Public works of art interest me in that someone cared enough about what they were doing to share it with the world.

**SM: When did you first start the plans for this memorial?**



**WE REMEMBER**

**THE GLENS FALLS**  
SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup> MEMORIAL

RS: It was the fifth anniversary of September 11th when I began my thought process. I felt the day that tore our country apart and yet brought us the closest together was being forgotten. I started to share my idea with friends. I heard great words of encouragement, but I never acted on it. After a couple of years of thinking, it was time. What made me come to that realization was something great that my wife's grandfather had once said. He said the problem with my generation is that we are all thinkers, not doers. That has stuck with me since that day. I wanted to be a doer.

**SM: What has all of this been like for you?**

RS: Two words. Learning process. Though I enjoy the work that goes into this project, I don't think I ever imagined just how time consuming it would be. A lot of time is spent in meetings, on the phone, or on the computer. I have been fortunate enough to meet many people and hear their personal stories of September 11th. Every time I hear one of these touching stories, it is like throwing another log on the fire that burns inside of me to keep pushing toward my goal.

**SM: How has this project affected your connection with the community of Glens Falls?**

RS: I have always loved our city. There is a huge sense of pride that comes with living in Glens Falls. I think the people of Glens Falls and surrounding communities truly appreciate what we are trying to accomplish. I believe that I have a strong connection with our city and I am so happy that I was given the opportunity to do this memorial.

**SM: What is your goal for this memorial?**

RS: I have three goals - remembrance, reflection, and education. I want to create a place where we can go to remember the events of that day and its effect on America. We witnessed a clear display of both hatred and love all wrapped up in one huge tragedy. We need a place to reflect on those who died, but also those who lived. I believe we all need a place to spark our stories that usually start out with "Where were you? I know where I was." The Glens Falls Fire Department conducts tours of the firehouse throughout the school year. Every year, thousands of children enter the firehouse to learn about fire safety, etc. Now they will be able to use our memorial as an educational tool to talk about September 11th.

**SM: What materials will be used for the actual sculpture?**

RS: Barre Grey granite from the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The Port Authority was kind enough to grant our request for a piece of the World Trade Center steel. Part of the steel will be used to make an antenna for the north tower and a piece will be mounted on the viewing area for all to see and touch.

**SM: How much money, total, is needed to fund the project?**

RS: \$40,000.00. This figure also includes handicap accessibility, site work, foundation, landscaping, and long-term maintenance.

**SM: In what ways are you working to raise the funds?**

RS: I am constantly racking my brain trying to figure out ways to raise the money. We have a website that was donated by Mannix Marketing where donations can be made securely using Paypal. Dan Hall from Hallwear in Glens Falls made great t-shirts that we have for sale on our site. We also have a corporate/business sponsorship program. With corporate sponsorship you will be able to write off your donations as advertising dollars when filing your tax returns. Silver sponsorship earns your name on a bronze plaque at the memorial site and recognition on our website and is available for one-hundred dollars. Gold sponsorship earns your name on the plaque, recognition on our website, and an ad in the Post Star (circulated to thousands daily) and is available for two-hundred and fifty dollars. Platinum sponsorship will yield all the above and a thank you ad on TV 8, all available for three-hundred and fifty dollars. If you choose to be a part of this great community project, please make your check payable to The Glens Falls September 11th Memorial. Please include your company's letterhead and send to 48 Harrison Ave, Glens Falls NY, 12801. Remember, every little bit helps. You can donate at any Glens Falls National Bank location—an account has been set up in the name of The Glens Falls September 11th Memorial. Or, visit our website at [www.september11thmemorial.org](http://www.september11thmemorial.org).

**SM: How close to your goal are you presently?**

RS: We have proudly raised about \$6,000.

**SM: Where in the city will the memorial be located?**

RS: The memorial will be located on the May Street side of the Glens Falls Fire Department, on Ridge Street.

**SM: Who has been your support system through this process?**

RS: First and foremost my family. My wife Jen, son Parker, and daughter Hayley are my biggest supporters. Chief Raymond Ives and the entire Glens Falls Fire Department help out whenever they can, lending great support. Mayor John "Jack" Diamond and his office and the Glens Falls Police Department are also big supporters. The Post Star has been great as well. There really are too many to list.

**SM: What have you learned about the people of Glens Falls throughout this project?**

RS: The people of this city are wonderful and eager to help. I have received kind words of encouragement from complete strangers who have learned about the project and support what we're doing. I would not live and raise my children anywhere else.

**SM: When do you hope to have the memorial completed?**

RS: Our goal is for the 10th anniversary of the September 11th tragedies—September 11th 2011

**SM: What one word describes you best?**

RS: Determined...in every sense of the word. This memorial will be built.

