Saddleback College 9/11 Commemoration Honors First Responders, Active Military and Veterans

Mission Viejo, CA – In a ceremony that included veterans and Orange County Fire Authority Chief Rick Robinson, Saddleback College paid tribute to those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 and to those who have committed themselves to defending our nation in the years since the tragic events of that day. The commemoration was hosted by College President Tod A. Burnett and took place in front of the Saddleback College Veterans Memorial, with the college’s Chief of Police Harry Parmer, a Marine Corps veteran, serving as the Master of Ceremonies.

“September 11, 2001 was a day that affected all of our lives and altered the course of our nation’s history,” said Dr. Burnett. “I want to thank everyone who came out to reflect today and honor not only those who perished, but also those who continue to sacrifice their very own lives to protect our country.”

Keynote Speaker Chief Robinson shared his feelings of 9/11 with the crowd, “Seeing those three firefighters raise a flag on the site of the world trader towers is an iconic memory for me. That day reminded me that heroes will arise unexpectedly in the face of dangers.”

The first speaker at the event was Jack Williams IV, a Saddleback College Dean’s List student and USMC veteran, who served a tour of duty in Iraq. He was 15 years old on September 11, 2001 and he reflected about feeling a deep anger that he had never experienced. “That day fundamentally altered the course of my life. Today, after serving in the military, I am still angry but I also recognize that our nation is not naturally invulnerable and we need to constantly support those who sacrifice their lives to defend our country.”

During a moment of silence, a wreath was laid at the veterans memorial by President Burnett, Chief Robinson, Williams, Saddleback College Police Officer Santos Garcia and Academic Senate President Carmen Dominguez. Saddleback College Music Student Trevor Drury, a tenor, followed the silent reflection with a moving rendition of America the Beautiful.

Located in Mission Viejo, Saddleback College provides quality higher education and training to the greater south Orange County community. Having served more than 500,000 students since 1968, Saddleback College offers more than 300 degree and certificate programs to help students reach their personal, career, and educational goals. For more information, please visit www.saddleback.edu.

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