



Academy for Academic Excellence
Patriot's Day Remembrance
Keynote speech delivered Sept. 11, 2018
by Apple Valley Mayor Art Bishop

Good morning! My name is Art Bishop, and I am honored to be your Mayor here in the Town of Apple Valley.

From conducting business at Town Council meetings, to helping kick off our Sunset Concerts, I have the privilege of speaking to many people at many events during the course of my duties as Mayor.



But as I look around this room and see all of your very young faces I am reminded that this is not a meeting. This is not a celebration, nor is it a holiday. It is a remembrance. It is a day to stop and reflect on the events that occurred on September 11, 2001.

Now, I realize that this date, and the tragic events that unfolded at that time, occurred before all of you students were born.

The AAE seniors in the class of 2019 will be the first graduating class born after it happened. But it is for that very reason that your Town Council appreciates the effort your school makes to mark this day each year with such reverence.

Spanish philosopher George Santayana once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”



It is important that you understand why and how this tragedy happened, so that *if* we ever face another unthinkable disaster, you'll know that you and your country can, and will, rise up and persevere against such evil.

Now I know that for many people, not just students, the 86,400 seconds in a day can fly by without any significant events. The days blur into weeks...the weeks into months, and so on. But then there are the days that become a fixed point in time that irrevocably stay with us forever.

For example, I remember exactly what I was doing and where I was when the news broke the story that President Kennedy had been shot.

I was right here in Apple Valley. I had to work in the Emergency Operations Center that was activated in the aftermath.

I clearly remember the day when the Challenger Space Shuttle exploded, and I definitely remember where I was on September 11 when our country's sense of safety and security was shattered.

I know you don't remember, but you know who does? Your parents! Your grandparents! Older relatives and their friends! And I would urge you to go home and ask them about it.

Ask them...What were they doing when they heard planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the field in Pennsylvania?

Ask them where they were and how it made them feel. Ask them if there is anything different about their world now then there was before it happened.

More importantly, listen to them!

Their memories are not the ramblings of your elders speaking about a bygone era. Their recollections are a roadmap through the path of adversity that may serve you very well if anything like this ever happens again. I pray that it doesn't.

Finally, I'd like to offer you some advice in the form of an acronym...the word LOVE. I want you to L.O.V.E. your life.

L stands for **Lead**. Some of you may already be doing this...in clubs, in sports, in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, in your school's R.O.T.C or Ambassador team. Continue to cultivate those leadership skills so your fellow men and women have someone to look up to in times of crisis.

O stands for **Overcome**. It doesn't matter whether you are five years old, or one hundred and five. We all have things we need to overcome.

...Shyness, loneliness, a difficult test in school, a tough interview for a job or the loss of a loved one. You've probably already faced many difficult days and I know you've survived 100% of them because you are here! So you're doing great. Continue to overcome.

V stands for **Values**. Everyone ranks their values differently. Family, faith, popularity, money, friendships....it doesn't matter *what* you value most.

What *does* matter is that you identify your values and then defend them...vigorously.

Take a stand for what matters to you, because as the saying goes, "if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything."



Finally, the **E** stands for **Evolve**. You are going to continue to grow and change your whole life. The things you value today are not the same things you will value ten years from now and that's ok. We learn something new every day. What we do with that knowledge is what defines us and evolves us over time.

On September 11, 2001 we learned that we are at our best when times are at their worst.

Terrorists tried to tear us apart, but we came together as a unified nation. People gave money, gave blood, gave their time, flew the flag of our great nation that continues to prosper today because of the people that love their life. They lead, overcome, value what is important, and evolve into the best version of themselves.

In closing, I urge you to do the same. Love your life.

I love mine, and I love being your Mayor. On behalf of your Apple Valley Town Council, it is my honor to be with you here on Patriot's Day.