

Declaration of Diana Hetzel

1. My name is Diana Hetzel and I reside at 134 Bulson Road, Rockville Centre, NY 11570.

2. I am the widow of FF Thomas J. Hetzel, Ladder #13. We were married over 5 years. Our daughter, Amanda, was 2.5 years old at the time of 9/11. Tom was a wonderful loving husband who adored his daughter, Amanda. He was a positive person and lover of life who always helped his family, friends, and neighbors. He dreamed of becoming a firefighter since he was a boy, and at 18, joined the local volunteer fire department. His dream of becoming a New York City fireman came true in October 1995 when he was inducted into the NYC Fire Service Academy. After graduation, Tom went to his dream firehouse, the one located on 85th Street between 3rd Avenue and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan. He liked being where the action was!

3. Tom was working his 24-hour shift from the evening of September 10 through the day shift on September 11, 2001. He was called to duty downtown at the World Trade Center site right after the second plane hit the South Tower at approximately 9:04am. They were assigned to the South Tower, but ended up operating in the North Tower. Tom's position that day was the outside vent man (OV), at the Trade Center his job entailed operating the elevator, bringing firemen up to certain floors and others back down. After the South Tower fell, Tom was bringing another fireman down when their elevator shook and it got trapped between floors. Tom and the other firefighter managed to escape the elevator and found a staircase to descend. The other firefighter managed to escape, but Tom met up with someone from his company so he had gone down with them and went missing when Tower One collapsed at 10:29am.

4. I was not notified of Tom being missing until after 10pm on September 11, 2001. Throughout that day I believed that he was working rescuing and saving people and had no opportunity to reach out to me because the cell phone towers were out. As the

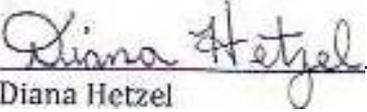
day went on, a teenage friend of ours from Breckenridge, Colorado called me for the second time that day and said to me point blank "Do I still believe he is OK?" It was the first time doubt and concern popped into my head. I told our friend I was unsure and I would make some calls to other FD friends to see what they knew about the day. I reached out to another FD wife that I had only met on a few occasions and she clearly told me "They were there and that her husband was injured and that they were bringing him home." I believe at that time, she knew my husband and the 9 other men from his truck company were all unaccounted for, but she didn't want to tell me. She had asked if the FD had reached out to me yet, and I said no. She told me she would call them for me and give me a call back. I waited what felt like hours for her return call. She told me, "They were making the calls now." She quickly got off the phone by telling me that fireman were helping her husband into their house at that moment; he fell from the building collapse. Within minutes of hanging up the phone with her, a Lieutenant from ladder #13/Engine#22 called me to say Tom was missing. I asked how could a 6'4" guy be missing. I was in shock, not knowing what to say or how to react. The Lieutenant said he would keep in touch throughout the night and let me know if they find him. Tom was found 3 weeks after September 11 in a stairwell during the recovery operation.

5. My daughter, Amanda & I will forever have a huge void in our hearts and home without Tom. We each still seek counseling for various aspects of our lives. We do the best we can to deal with our new normal life. My family, our extended family and our friends are our biggest supporters.

6. This September will be the 19th anniversary since the September 11 attacks on our nation. To date we have not been told the full truth regarding the events of that day. Trials will only begin in January 2021 in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for some of those involved in the attacks. Why is justice taking so long! Those responsible for these attacks, have caused thousands of lost lives and caused others

injuries and life long health issues, need to be legally held accountable sooner rather than later!

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1746, I, Diana Hetzel, hereby swear, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing statements are true and correct to the best of my information and belief.


Diana Hetzel

3/15/2020