

I am especially honored to stand here today with these good people to speak on behalf of the families of the Massachusetts fallen heroes.

This will be my 6th Memorial Day to hear my son John's name read aloud in Bedford's Memorial Park and weep; and so I have become one of the Wise Women of our community. We have little in common socially, politically or religiously. We do share the fierce pride in our loved ones for serving our country in these difficult times; the dignity of hanging our Gold Star banner in our front window even though it attracts con artists as well as kindred hearts; and the bravery to speak up for the needs of other military families. We pack supplies for the troops, and volunteer in the Veteran's Hospitals.

We comfort each other by sharing the loss; accepting that the death of anyone from anything but advanced old age is a heartrending tragedy. We know what is important: to remember the beauty of a child's smile and a young man's dreams, and to seek those things in the young people around us.

The Mass Military Heroes Fund will provide concrete assistance and advocacy that the Gold Star families need. And we are grateful to the 911 families for transcending their own losses and reaching out to us. This is the best example of sharing the sacrifice. And it illustrates the undaunted, unflinching, unshakable, and unwavering unity of the American Spirit.

Thank you.