

An Enduring Legacy of Hope

Twenty-five years after the Pan Am 103 terrorist bombing, SU and Lockerbie, Scotland, remain committed to honoring those lost and moving forward in their memory

By Kelly Homan Rodoski

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, STUDENTS FROM Syracuse University and other schools and colleges embarked on a journey of a lifetime. They began their study abroad experiences in Europe—London and Florence in particular—through SU’s Division of International Programs Abroad (DIPA, now SU Abroad). They could all be described as bright, ambitious, curious; young women and men of unlimited potential who were just starting to chart the courses of their lives, plan their careers, and prepare for their futures. They were sons and daughters, granddaughters and grandsons, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, cousins, friends, and beloved members of the SU community. Sadly, these promising lives were cut short when a terrorist bomb exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, on the plane carrying them home—beginning a journey of healing and friendship between the SU and Lockerbie communities devastated by the horrific act.

The bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 on December 21, 1988, took the lives of 270 people, including 35 students studying through DIPA. The tragedy changed the lives of their families and friends forever, taught lessons about the fragility of life, and served as a reminder to all that terrorism is not something that happens only to people on the other side of the world. Julie Friend '92 recalls learning about the bombing while dining on Marshall Street with her roommate, celebrating the end of exams. “I don’t remember much about what happened next, but we knew the event was significant,” says Friend, a 1990-91 Remembrance Scholar who is now associate director for international safety and security in the Study Abroad Office at Northwestern University.

Then-Chancellor Melvin A. Eggers made a commitment to the families of the victims that Syracuse University

would always remember their loved ones. From the grief of the first few years came the most prominent examples of the Pan Am 103 legacy on campus and ways to honor the victims: the construction of the Place of Remembrance in front of the Hall of Languages; the development of the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie Air Disaster Archives, dedicated to all 270 victims; the establishment of the Remembrance Scholarships, which are awarded annually to 35 SU seniors to honor the memory of the students lost in 1988; and the Lockerbie Scholarships, which bring two students annually from the Scottish community to study for a year at SU.

While honoring those lost over the past 25 years, something powerful has naturally developed—a legacy of hope, understanding, and commitment to moving forward. “The Remembrance Scholarship was one of the most unique, rewarding, and cherished experiences I have participated in,” says Jesse Feitel '13, a 2012-13 Remembrance Scholar and first-year College of Law student. As a Remembrance Scholar, Feitel was tasked with educating others about the incident, helping to draw lessons from it, and honoring the victims. “I came to SU knowing little about the Pan Am tragedy generally, and virtually nothing of its connection to Syracuse University,” he says. “I completed my year feeling a connection to those who passed away and a duty to carry on their memories.”

Perhaps this legacy of hope is illustrated best in the strong relationship that has developed between Syracuse University and Lockerbie. Through the years, nearly 50 young men and women from Lockerbie have come to SU as Lockerbie Scholars. “The Lockerbie Scholarship isn’t a once-in-a-lifetime experience—it’s much more special than that,” says Fergus Barrie, a 2011-12 Lockerbie Scholar who is now a junior, electing to remain at SU to complete his degree.

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—Jesse Feitel '13, a 2012-13 Remembrance Scholar



The 2013-14 Remembrance Scholars walk to the Place of Remembrance for the Rose Laying Ceremony.

University Archivist Ed Galvin congratulates 2011-12 Lockerbie Scholar Fergus Barrie, now an SU student, during the 2013 Remembrance Convocation.

Vera Osafo '12, a 2011-12 Remembrance Scholar stands at the Place of Remembrance.

The Place of Remembrance, which sits in front of the Hall of Languages, was dedicated in 1990 to commemorate those lost on Pan Am Flight 103.

Newhouse multimedia photography and design professor Lawrence Mason Jr. G'79, G'85 lost students in the tragedy. In the past 17 years, he has taken about 100 people to Lockerbie, including 80 students. He and his Newhouse colleague, magazine professor Melissa Chessher, collaborated with student writers and photographers on the book *Looking for Lockerbie*, as a way to highlight the beauty of the town, its people, and its history, and to help it move away from its identity as the site of a devastating terrorist attack.

Mason, who teaches regularly in SU's London program, has forged strong friendships with the people of Lockerbie. For two summers, he took students from his London-based summer fashion photography program to Lockerbie, where residents went out of their way to provide transportation and

assist with other needs. "I know of no place in the world in which local residents would go above and beyond with kindness to help us succeed," Mason says.

To commemorate the 25th anniversary, Syracuse University hosted exhibitions, panel discussions, and other events this fall that looked back to honor the victims and acted forward to learn from the tragedy's lessons. Among them was a special University Lectures presentation, "Pan Am 103 and Our World 25 Years Later," a conversation between former U.S. Senator and diplomat George J. Mitchell and Maxwell School Dean James Steinberg.

During Remembrance Week, an annual series of events hosted by the Remembrance Scholars in October, the University held the Rose-Laying Ceremony and Remembrance Convocation. Another



A LIVING MEMORIAL

IN A LETTER TO THE FAMILIES OF VICTIMS OF THE 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, Kathryn Turman, a former U.S. Department of Justice official, speaks of “the remarkable capacity of people to create limitless good out of unimaginable suffering.” Her message is the foreword in the second printing of *On Eagles’ Wings* (2000), a book of remembrance that memorializes all 270 victims and signifies the sacred relationship between the people of Lockerbie and the families of those killed. “Every crime against a person—especially every violent death—produces a ripple effect that touches the lives of countless others and changes those lives forever,” says Turman, then director of the Office for Victims of Crime. “It is right that there is a combined record of the faces and stories of those whose lives were ended in the bombing of Pan Am 103, and that this record should live on...”

VISIT
archives.syr.edu/panam
 to learn more about
 the Pan Am Flight 103
 Archives.

The photos, clippings, and written correspondences that served as resources for creating the book are just one aspect of a vast collection of materials honoring those lost in the bombing and documenting its aftermath. On the sixth floor of Bird Library, the Pan Am Flight 103/Lockerbie Air Disaster Archives provides a safe, hushed, and painstakingly cataloged home for this collection—an intimate record of the 25-year-old global tragedy that still breaks our hearts, and a living chronicle of the quest for security, justice, and healing it engendered. “It’s an incredibly personal collection,” says Edward L. Galvin, Pan Am 103 archivist and director of Archives and Records Management within the Office of the Chancellor, who considers his work with the Pan Am Flight 103 Archives the greatest challenge of his career and a true labor of love. “For us, it’s a way to memorialize the victims, commemorate what they did, and make sure that people don’t forget these lives.”

Established in 1990, the archives consists of several hundred boxes containing thousands of records, including personal items

memorializing the victims; books, articles, and government publications; materials related to the Victims of Pan Am Flight 103 Inc. family group and its advocacy work for justice, victims’ rights, and enhanced airline security; information on memorials in Syracuse, Lockerbie, and Washington, D.C.; and materials generated by the University, including those from the Lockerbie Trial Families Project sponsored by the College of Law. “The archives is a source of memory, a resource for research, and an inspiration for art—from play writing to poetry to the visual arts,” says Judith O’Rourke ’75, G’10, director of the Office of Undergraduate Studies, who has served as the University’s liaison with victims’ families since the event occurred and is instrumental in the annual selection of Remembrance Scholars (see page 47).

Jane Davis, who lost her daughter Shannon in the bombing, considers the archives a fitting tribute to her daughter, and to all those who died. “The idea of the archives pleases me very much,” she says. “Especially the idea of having all the resources gathered in one place and available to the citizens of the world.” Shannon, a junior in the College for Human Development, was one of 35 SU students returning from a semester in London or Florence. The postcards she sent her mother in fall 1988 are now held safe in the archives, offering a poignant portrait of Shannon and a timeless glimpse of her study abroad experience.

Thanks to the financial support of the Davis family and the generosity of many others touched by the tragedy, the archives was able to hire Cara Howe G’10 as assistant archivist. In this position, which is funded for five years, Howe is diligently processing the collections, assisting with research requests, coordinating digitization of the archives, and monitoring the web site to provide increased access. Fund-raising efforts continue toward the \$2 million goal of permanently endowing the position. Additionally, new donations of materials related to the event are encouraged. “We need a place where you can study and discuss what happened in December 1988,” Davis says. “I love that SU has the vision to serve the global community.” —Amy Speech

of the commemoration's major initiatives was *Telling the Stories: The Pan Am Flight 103 Story Archives Project*, which invited campus community members to share their memories of the students who died aboard Pan Am 103, the impact of the tragedy on the campus community, and the tragedy's enduring legacy both on campus and around the world (archives.syr.edu/panam/story_archives/oral_histories.html). Oral histories were recorded with more than 25 individuals in the United Kingdom in early September as part of this project. "The oral histories are a crucial component of the historic record," says Cara Howe G'10, assistant archivist for the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie Air Disaster Archives. "They allow those who experienced the disaster and were involved in the aftermath to describe the events as they remember them. At 25 years out, individuals who had these experiences become more and more difficult to contact, so now is the time to collect these memories while we can."

Families and friends were also invited to share their memories through digital storytelling, an initiative led by Tara McLarney Nygaard '89, who participated in the London fall 1988 semester abroad. Nygaard enrolled in a graduate program in global and international education at Drexel University shortly after the 20th anniversary of Pan Am 103. She later made a video at a Center for Digital Storytelling workshop that helped her process the tragedy. "I almost never spoke of my experiences from December 1988, but I knew that if I wanted to help others share their stories I first needed to share this very important part of my life," she says. "The workshop was very healing because it helped me make meaning of the days and years that followed my semester abroad in 1988. The act of creating and sharing my video with others helped me work through those emotions that lay dormant for so many years. Now I feel I can move forward and pay tribute to my friends in positive and productive ways."

On December 21, communities will come together at five places around the globe to pay tribute to the victims of Pan Am 103. The Reverend Tiffany Steinwert, dean of Hendricks Chapel, and the



Cara Howe G'10, assistant archivist for the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie Air Disaster Archives, speaks to retired Lockerbie Chief Constable John Boyd at Cornwall Mount in Dumfries, Scotland. Boyd contributed to *Telling the Stories: The Pan Am Flight 103 Story Archives Project*.

Reverend Sandy Stoddart, minister of the Lockerbie (Dryfesdale) Church of Scotland, collaborated on a common prayer for peace that will be read simultaneously at 2:04 p.m. Eastern time, following a moment of silence at 2:03 p.m., and join voices from Lockerbie to London, Syracuse to New York City to Washington, D.C. The prayer is meant to be a message of hope to all throughout the world who have been affected by terrorism and inhumanity. "We decided that co-authoring this prayer would symbolize the unity and friendship that has sprung from the tragedy over the past 25 years," Steinwert says. "If anything good can be said to come from this act of terror, it has been the deep bonds of friendship that have grown across the pond, connecting the hearts of Syracuse and Lockerbie as one. Writing the prayer together we hope embodies this bond." ◀◀



British Honor for O'Rourke

AN ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE) honor from the United Kingdom will

be bestowed upon Judith O'Rourke '75, G'10, director of undergraduate studies, in recognition of her work over the past 25 years to develop and strengthen the bonds between Lockerbie and Syracuse.

O'Rourke is the Syracuse facilitator of the Lockerbie Scholarships, which allow two students from Lockerbie to come to SU annually for one year of study. "In everything she has done, Judy has gone far beyond what her job would require in providing support to the students who have gone from Lockerbie Academy to Syracuse University," Dumfriesshire MP David Mundell told the Scottish press. "It is therefore fitting that she is honored for her outstanding and long-lasting friendship with Lockerbie and huge personal

contribution she has made to U.S. and U.K. relations in the most difficult of circumstances."

O'Rourke also oversees the Remembrance Scholarships and is the liaison between the University and the families of the student victims. She is a member of the board of directors of the Victims of Pan Am Flight 103 Inc. and a past recipient of the group's Keeping the Spirit Alive Award. She is expected to receive the OBE honor at an official ceremony in the United States later this year. "I am overwhelmed by the honor," O'Rourke says. "This is totally unexpected, and I know that I have many friends in Scotland, and many colleagues at SU, to thank for this award."