

**President Steger's remarks  
Day of Remembrance  
April 16, 2012**

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Good evening, and thank all of you for coming together tonight to again mark an anniversary of events that are almost too terrible to remember but that we will never forget – the tragedy that struck our campus on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

The passage of five years has done nothing to diminish our great sorrow. The pain in our hearts remains only too real.

Tonight, we gather to remember the 32 dear members of the Virginia Tech family who perished that horrendous day, and to comfort their families and friends, who continue to seek solace.

We also remember those who were injured, and offer them our love and support as they continue to seek their own paths of recovery.

As we come here in the twilight, I am again reminded of the philosopher's words:

*Truly, it is in **darkness** that one finds the light,  
so when we are in sorrow,  
then this light is nearest to all of us.*

Last night, at midnight, a single 24-hour ceremonial candle was lit by a flame carried from the inside of Burruss Hall. The light that continues to shine from Burruss symbolizes the promise that the Virginia Tech community will always remember the lives of those lost on April 16th, 2007.

A little later in our ceremony, there are 32 remembrance candles that will be lit from the single flame of the ceremonial candle, and we will then begin to spread the light through the crowd.

Once the remembrance candles are lit, we will take the light from the ceremonial candle and distribute the light to you, the Hokie community, in memory of those who lost their lives on April 16, 2007.

We ask that you please wait to light your candle until you receive it from the light of the ceremonial candle.

It is our fervent hope that, like the candles you hold, you will be a light, bringing illumination to the darkness of our memories and show the way to a brighter tomorrow.

Thousands around the world have reached out to this community, supporting us in our days and years of need and offering us the light of their love and compassion.

Such support continues today. Here on campus we've had the Run in Remembrance, the Community Picnic, Remembrance Through the Arts Showcase, the "Healing through Art" exhibit, and times and places for quiet reflection.

Across the nation, our devoted alumni – and friends – are giving back to their communities through remembrance events.

All these events symbolize:

Our resolve to never forget those we lost that horrible day;

Our continuing support for their families and loved ones, as well as those injured in body or soul;

And our commitment to move forward with our belief in Ut Prosim, That I May Serve.

The world has seen and marveled at the resiliency of the Virginia Tech family. I ask you to continue to be strong, be mindful of those who suffer in misfortune, and to be of service to others.

Remember the loving hands of family, friends, and this community and extend that strong arm of support to others in this community and across the nation.

Finally, it is our most ardent wish that this special remembrance ceremony will help sustain you and provide you with a measure of peace .....comfort.... and strength.

And now, we are honored to welcome this evening the Governor of Virginia, Bob McDonnell, here to lend his support.



On this and the ensuing days five years ago, as then-attorney general, he rushed to campus to offer his help and guidance.

In addition to his official duties, he took the time to join me in visiting with the injured in area hospitals.

We greatly appreciated his help during the turmoil of those days, and we are very grateful for his continuing support.

Ladies and gentlemen, Gov. Bob McDonnell.

Governor . . .