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. . . My generation must rebuild it

By VINCENT MURRAY

My generation was raised largely in prosperity, without crisis or calamity. That changed forever Sept. 11.

The destruction of the World Trade Center seemed almost surreal until I attended a memorial service for Joe and Danny Shea, two brothers from Pelham who were bond traders for Cantor Fitzgerald, where I worked on the 104th floor as an intern for two summers.

I looked on as their widows and seven children — ages 6 months to 15 years — walked down the aisle of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church on the upper East Side. It struck me then that our losses, so great and sorrowful now, will only be magnified in the years ahead.

I can tell endless stories of smiles, friendly faces and huge hearts that welcomed me into the familylike atmosphere of Cantor Fitzgerald. Joe and Danny and many others taught me their craft, spending hours showing me the intricacies of the financial markets.

When the first plane struck the north tower, nearly all those who worked at Cantor Fitzgerald would have been at their desks.

With the fires burning several floors below, it was impossible for them to escape down the emergency staircases, and many employees called loved ones from their cell phones. Joe Shea told his wife he was all right and said he was going to find his younger brother.

The best tribute I can offer Joe and Danny and the other men and women of Cantor Fitzgerald is to honor their legacy. They taught me how to do things the right way — maybe sometimes not the most profitable way, but certainly the most ethical.

As a senior in college, I will soon be looking for a job. One of the first places I had planned to bring my résumé was Cantor Fitzgerald. This would be an ideal place to work, offering a training program and direct placement into a department.

Now, as I prepare my résumé and attend job fairs, I wonder what the future holds for Cantor Fitzgerald and the other businesses devastated Sept. 11.

I believe that with the help of this year's college graduates and those who follow us, we can meet the challenge of beginning to rebuild the Cantor Fitzgeralds of New York.

With the examples of courage and sacrifice shown on and since Sept. 11, I think we're up to it.

Murray, of Larchmont, Westchester County, is a senior at the University of Richmond.

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