

APPLAUDING THE HEROES OF 9/11

On Sept. 14, 2001, political commentator and journalist Peggy Noonan traveled with friends to Lower Manhattan to observe for herself the rescue efforts in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy.

She stood along the West Side Highway as the convoys of rescuers – considered by some as “the grunts of the city” – returned from their 12-hour shifts of digging through the burning rubble. She cheered, along with the other spectators, as they rolled by.

“We’d cheer and wave and shout ‘God bless you!’ and ‘We love you!’ We waved flags and signs, clapped and threw kisses, and we meant it. We loved these men ... I realized a lot of them hadn’t been applauded since they danced at their wedding.”

And suddenly, she added, “I looked around me at all of us who were cheering and saw who we were. Investment bankers! Orthodontists! Magazine editors! In my group, a lawyer, a columnist and a writer. We had been the kings and queens of the city, respected professionals in a city that respects its professional class. And this night we were nobody. We were so useless, all we could do was applaud the somebodies, the workers who, unlike us, had not been applauded much in their lives. And now they were saving our city.”



Peggy Noonan, by the way, is a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and bestselling author of seven books on American politics, history and culture. Her essays have appeared in *Forbes*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and other publications. She also was a primary speech writer and special assistant to President Ronald Reagan.

And yet, as she stood along the highway on this occasion at this particular time, she recognized and hailed the true heroes of 9/11 and its aftermath.

She turned to a friend and said, “I have seen the grunts of New York become kings and queens of the city ... They’d always been the people who ran the place, who kept it going; they’d just never been given their due. But now – ‘And the last shall be first’ – we’re making up for it.”

(more)

Maybe in your job at Life Care or Century Park you've not appeared in a movie or television series, or written a column for a national magazine, or worked on the staff of a U.S. President. But you can be proud of what you do. And when someone walks through the front door – whether it be someone from the corporate office of your company, the mayor of your town or a representative from Congress visiting, take pride in what you do.

And especially if the people who come through your center are family or friends of patients and residents, you can be assured they know who runs the place. In their eyes, you are their heroes.

Jesus said: *So the last will be first, and the first will be last* (Matthew 20:16 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter