



**President Charles Steger places a single rose on a memorial, created by students in front of Burruss Hall, concluding the statewide “moment of silence” observance on April 20.**

know that thousands of new students will come for the same experience that current ones are having. And, yes, they too will become proud alumni and join you in carrying the torch of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

A moving illustration of the tragedy we have all just lived through is in the story of one of our professors who lost his daughter in Norris Hall. He sent an e-mail to his classes later that day saying that he was unsure how or where classes would continue. And he gave his students one final assignment: “. . . perhaps the most important lesson you will learn in life. Go to your mother, father, brothers, and sisters and tell them with all your heart how much you love them. And tell them that you know how much they love you, too. Go out of your way to make good memories. At some point, those memories may be all you have left.”

I recall an occasion in the mid-80s at which Robert Pamplin Sr.—for whom the College of Business and its building are both named—read an official statement to kick off the university’s first major capital campaign. A bit uncomfortably, he read the words that had been written for him, and then he put down

his script and said, “Now let me tell you what is in my heart.” He explained that life had treated him well, and he felt an obligation and satisfaction in giving back to the place that had given him the most rewarding experiences of his life.

Now, let me tell you what is in my heart: Virginia Tech has drawn and will continue to draw strength from unity, whether making memories with friends, recalling those memories, bonding with other students and professors, or simply learning from the amazing group of fine people who are drawn to this place. Our alumni must continue to come together wherever they live. They must continue to connect by phone, e-mail, or in person to renew their bonds. And they must show the world how much they love their alma mater. Because there is no more special place in the entire world.

As the eyes of the world peer at us, they see what makes us truly a Hokie Nation. They see what makes us the proudest alumni in the world. And they come to understand that this feeling is so very powerful that it never, never can be violated or destroyed.

WE are Virginia Tech. *VirginiaTechforlife.* □