

**Kettering University Memorial Service  
In memory of the Virginia Tech tragedy  
Friday, April 20, 2007  
Comments by President Stan Liberty**

**Good afternoon. Thank you for being here.**

**Our hearts go out to our fellow students, friends and colleagues on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.**

**We are all deeply affected by this horrific tragedy, with its loss of life and its rude reminder that “there is no perfectly safe haven anywhere.”**

**The tragic event at Virginia Tech this week was and will be a life-changing event for college students everywhere in our nation. From this day forward, you will always remember where you were and what you were doing on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007.**

**Every American has experienced events like this (events that can be life-changing), and as you grow older you accumulate multiple such experiences that affect you deeply. All one has to do is mention certain dates and places and vivid memories and emotions return. For example:**

**September 11, 2001, NYC, Washington, DC, and a field in Pennsylvania, thousands dead and injured;**

**Eight years ago today, April 20, 1999, Columbine, CO, 13 dead and 24 injured;**

**Twelve years ago yesterday, April 19, 1995, Oklahoma City, 168 dead including 19 children;**

**August, 1, 1966, Sniper in the Clock Tower of the University of Texas Austin, 16 dead;**

**Friday, November 22, 1963, Dallas Texas. I was taking an advanced calculus examination at Notre Dame. About half way through the exam the professor that was monitoring the exam announced that President John F. Kennedy had been shot. Many of us locked up emotionally at that point – I couldn't write anymore on the exam and failed it miserably.**

**Yes, we are deeply affected by such tragic events, but by joining together and trying to understand what appears to be incomprehensible, we can heal, we can calm our fears, we can learn and grow, and we can be better prepared with the strength to deal with traumatic events in our future.**

**Continue to open up to each other and discuss the events of this week as part of the healing process for this campus and for this country.**

**You are a member of an extended university community, and you are the future of this country and the societal ideals for which we strive.**

**The collective strength you are gathering right now by engaging in that community will serve society well in the future and it will help our country recover from the tragic losses of this week.**