

The Experience

The memorial experience begins at street level, where the most prominent parts of the memorial are clearly visible - the somber, black outlines of the tower footprints and two 19-foot tall black towers, located roughly halfway between the ends of the two ramps. From this distance, with no names or details visible, the memorial may appear to some as an abstract representation of the original World Trade Center. From street level, the Index towers do not appear to be very large and most of the rest of the memorial appears to be relatively open space.

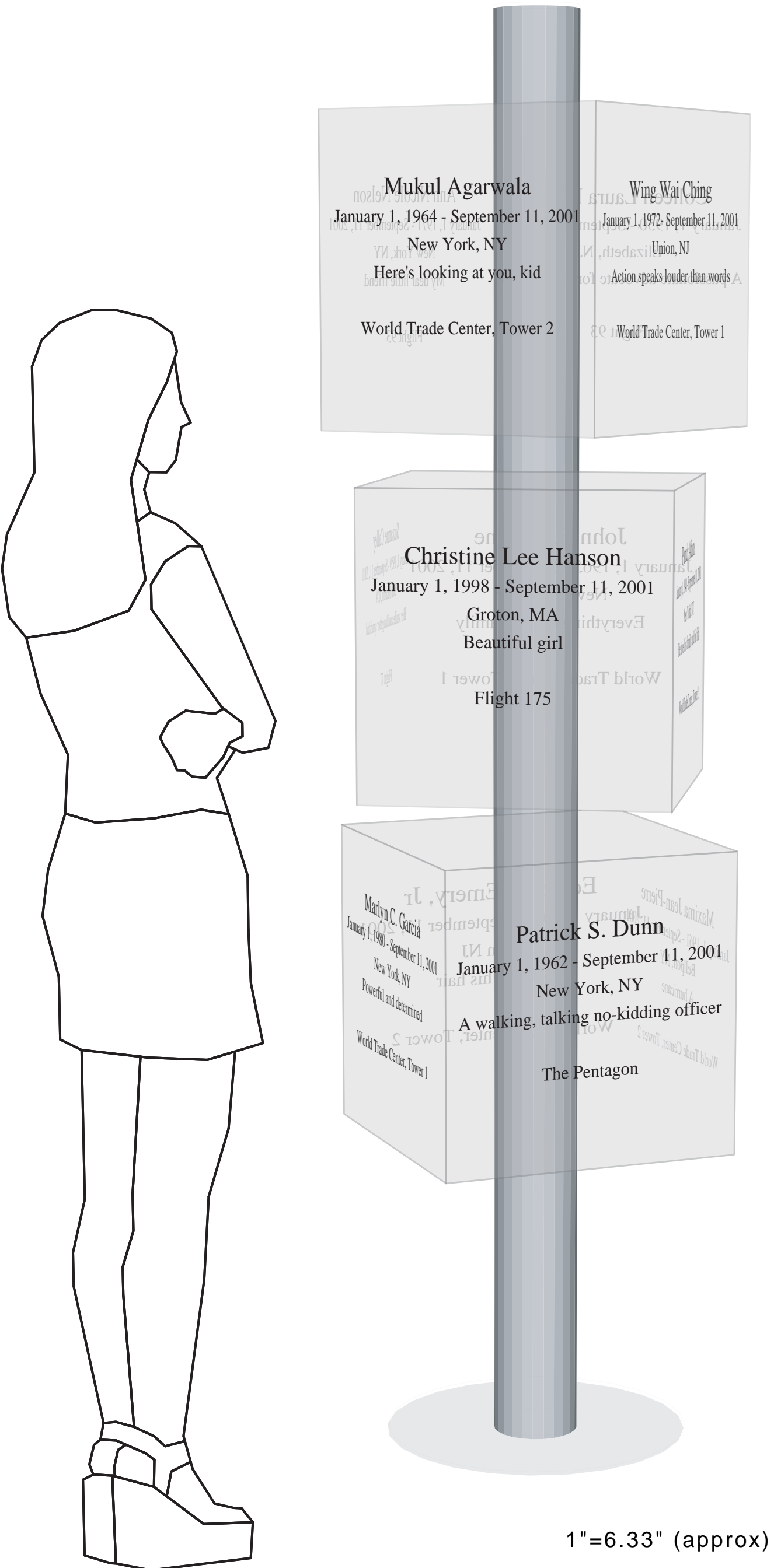
As a visitor descends a ramp into the memorial, their perspective changes. The Index towers will appear to grow taller. Visible from every vantage point within the memorial, they tower over the rest of the memorial as the World Trade Center towered over the surrounding buildings. Up close, the Index towers may be uncomfortably tall to many people and the lists of victims may be somewhat numbing. Some visitors will want to see the whole list or will want to see it in a particular way, by where the victims were from or where they were on September 11th. The Indexes meet this need. The Index towers also contain a prominent dedication of the memorial to the many Americans and citizens of the world who aided in rescue, recovery, and healing. While this phrasing is not final, it is my intent that it be worded so as to be as inclusive as possible, to help with healing.

In every direction, there are groups of 7-foot tall Memorial Columns inscribed with personal memorials of each of the 3,016 victims, along with round benches that provide a place to sit and reflect within close proximity to the columns. This view completes the transition for a visitor from observer to participant. By their design, the Memorial Columns and cubes invite visitors to touch them. By touching and turning the cubes to view a particular personal memorial, a visitor makes a personal connection to the memorial which is not disturbed by the presence of others. In this way, each memorial column creates its own personal space for visitors.

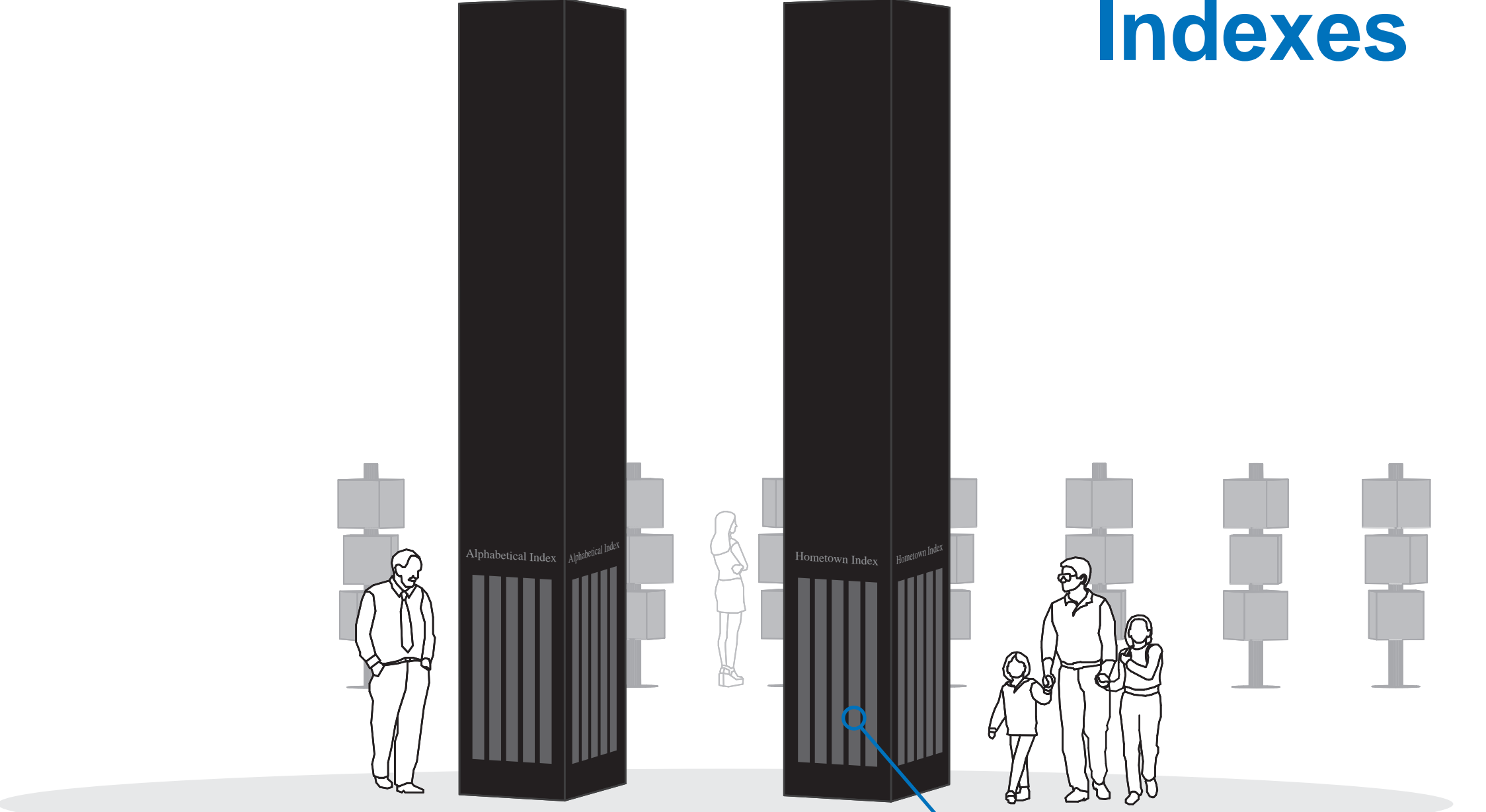
The Memorial Columns are arranged in graceful arcs. This portion of the memorial is intended to be accepting, inviting, and organic. The transparency of the cubes is intended to help visitors to experience their own feelings while viewing personal memorials. The way any portion of the memorial looks will always be changing as cubes are rotated, or as visitors leave remembrances at the bases of the memorial columns. There is no best way to view the personal memorials and, with the rotation of the cubes, there are countless ways in which they may be viewed. Although the memorial columns are separated from each other enough so that most people will be able to walk through the arcs at any point, the arcs serve as natural walls which people will walk along. Visitors who feel a need to "walk" the memorial while viewing personal memorials may do so conveniently. The segmentation of the columns into groups allows visitors to view an entire single group and have a sense of completion or closure without having to view every single personal memorial. The segmentation of the columns into groups also facilitates repeated visits to a particular personal memorial because it will be much easier to remember a group and a location in a group than a single location among all of the columns.

From the plaza floor, the black outlines of the tower footprints are less visible and the green of the footprint lawns appears dominant. The outlines serve as a path for those visitors who feel the need to trace the tower footprints or feel the expanse of the tower. Heated from underneath so that snow will melt off them quickly, the black outlines will be visible and walkable year round, even when the rest of the memorial is covered with snow. The entire interior of the tower footprints are a lush, full lawn, which feels alive. This is the place for kids to play and people to have picnics. As odd as it may seem, I would not be surprised to see a wedding at the memorial site, in the presence of the memory of a loved one. Should this occur, the lawn is the place for it.

Memorial Column



Note: The illustrated victim information is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have written sample descriptive lines using information available in obituaries and memorials. All birthdates are given as January 1, since that information is not available.



1 Recognition of Victims
Victims are recognized in two different ways. First, every victim is listed in the Indexes, which contain lists of the victims. The indexes list a Memorial Column for each victim, where a personal memorial for that victim may be found.

Indexes
The Indexes are two 19'6" tall columns of black granite. The granite is the same as that used for the tower footprint outlines, but the indexes are highly polished - enough so that a visitor can see their reflection.

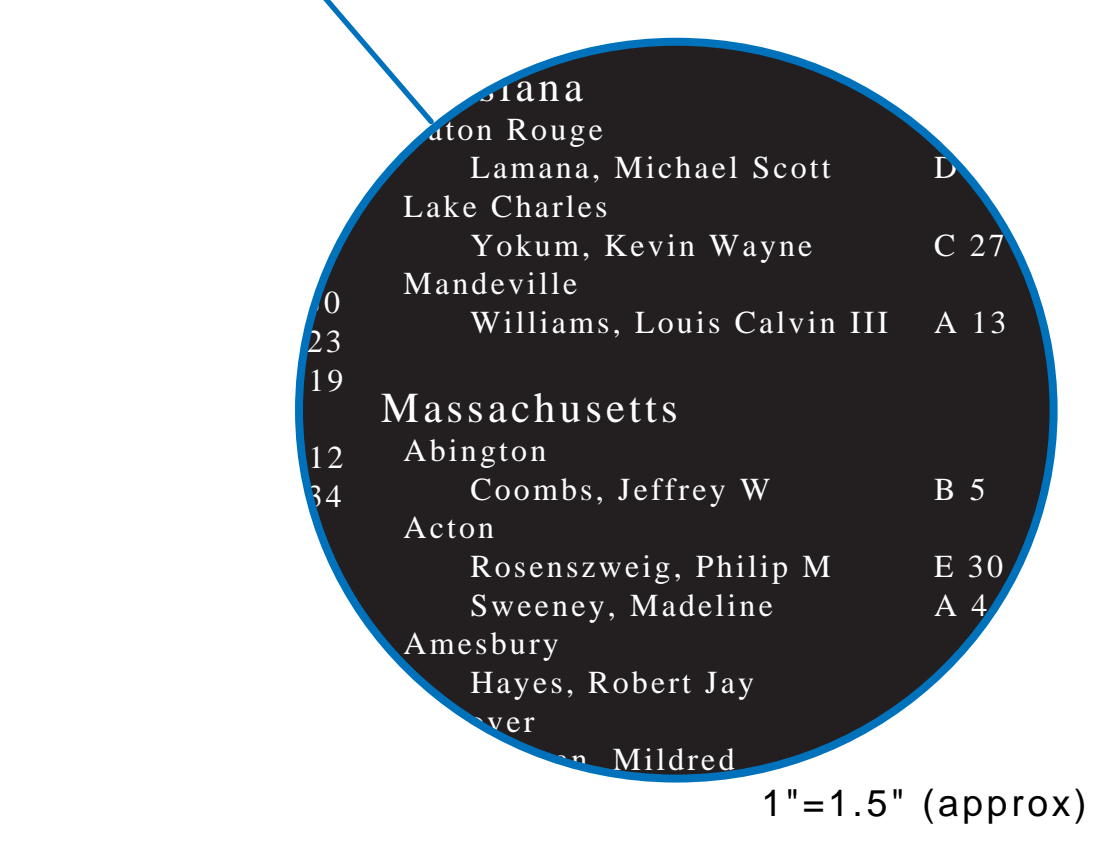
The two towers contain three separate indexes of all 3,016 victims:
- Alphabetical Index (by last name)
- Hometown Index (by home country, state, and city)
- Location Index (by where they were on 9/11/2001 or 2/26/1993)

For each victim, the index specifies the Memorial Column where their personal memorial can be found. The index does not specify a location on the column. This is intentional, so that visitors looking for a particular personal memorial must touch the memorial to turn the cubes and thereby make a personal connection with the memorial itself, while also increasing their awareness of other victims.

Each index takes two sides of an index tower. The remaining sides are reserved for a large dedication of the memorial as well as a map of the memorial and an explanation of the Indexes, plus some information about the World Trade Center, September 11, and the memorial itself. Space is also reserved on these two sides if it is necessary to add any additional information after the memorial is constructed.

The plaza floor under the indexes is a slightly darker color than the rest of the plaza floor, in a circle with a diameter of 36'. The perimeter of this circle contains a series of flush-mounted lights aimed toward the Index towers.

Memorial Columns
There are 252 Memorial Columns, each of which contain 12 personal memorials of victims. Each Memorial Column consists of a 7' tall, 5" diameter stainless steel cylinder on which are mounted three 18" glass cubes which rotate freely around the cylinder. The cubes can be moved easily but cannot be spun quickly. The edges of the cubes are rounded so there are no sharp edges or corners. The cubes are transparent (but not perfectly so) and have enough of a surface texture to not show fingerprints or small scratches. The columns are arranged in six curved groups (see plan and description, upper right).



Each vertical face of the cubes contains a single personal memorial for a victim:
- Name of the victim
- Birth date - Death date
- Hometown (or Residence)
- Descriptive line supplied by the family of the victim
- Location on 9/11/2001 or 2/26/1993

The text for the personal memorials is etched deeply into the face of the cubes and the inside backs of the letters are painted black, making them both very touchable and very readable. Over time, the faces of the cubes will wear where they are touched. Although the chosen material, large letters, and deep etching will ensure that the letters remain readable for a very long time, the wear from people touching the faces will serve to make each personal memorial more personal and distinct from others.

Each personal memorial has a Death date, even though the vast majority of them will be September 11, 2001. This is intentional, so that visitors who are going through a section of the memorial will see this date repeated over and over again. This will strongly contrast with the rest of the information, most of which will be different from face to face. The arrangement of the personal memorials will be random, except for cases where multiple family members died. In this case, their personal memorials will be placed adjacent to each other.

Around the base of each Memorial Column, flush with the plaza floor, is an 18" diameter bezel for a ring of lights which are aimed straight up to illuminate the column at night. These lights will make the arcs very visible at night. The circle of the bezel also serves as a place where personal remembrances, such as flowers, notes, etc., may be left.

The glazed wall and the Liberty Wall frame the memorial site. At the North end, the glazed wall is filled with a large, etched mural which shows views of the three September 11 sites - a New York City skyline with the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania farmland. At the South end, the Liberty Wall contains a few quotations about liberty, freedom, and peace.

2 Visitation and Contemplation
The entire Memorial Plaza is an area for visitation and contemplation. Although most of the plaza is open space, the groups of Memorial Columns visually separate the plaza into smaller areas. This means that a visitor to a particular section of the memorial will not see most of the other visitors to the memorial. The curved groups facilitate the softening of this space. Within this space, the design of the Memorial Columns help visitors create their own personal space.

4 Unidentified Remains
The southwest corner of the Memorial Plaza is reserved for a structure to house unidentified remains. It is my preference that the exterior walls of this structure be curved, as shown. If the exterior of the structure does not follow the curve, the curved area will be delineated by a change in flooring material around the structure.

5 Tower Footprints
The tower footprints are outlined with a 10' wide border of black granite. This granite is the same as the Indexes are constructed out of, but it is rough, like a sidewalk. The outlines are heated from underneath and have a line of drains on both sides. The interior is a lush, full lawn. If shading from the overhanging buildings prevent a full lawn, any additional landscaping would be done in the same spirit.

Round platforms, 3' in diameter and 20" high, are placed in groups of two and three throughout the plaza to serve as benches. These provide many spots where a visitor can sit by themselves, near a section of the memorial which is important to them.

Unlike conventional benches, these round benches do not face any particular direction. They are large enough to fit two or three people, yet not large enough to lie down on. The benches match the plaza floor in color (if not material). The sides of the benches are angled in slightly so that the base is 2'8" in diameter rather than 3'. This makes the benches look a bit less solid and increases comfort of people sitting on them. Around the base of the bench, there are five downward-angled lights which illuminate the area around the benches at night.

Note: The benches shown in the plan view are illustrational only, showing fewer benches than there will be in the real memorial. Since some people may have problems sitting on benches without backs, there will also be some conventional benches against the perimeter walls of the plaza.

In addition to the benches, it is expected that the tower outlines will serve a similar purpose for some people, who will find solace in walking around a predetermined path that takes them away from and back toward the rest of the memorial.

3 Family Areas
There are two areas set aside for families and loved ones of victims, within the footprint lawns of each of the two towers. They are situated away from most visitor traffic and mostly sheltered from the weather by the overhanging buildings. Each is approximately 2500 square feet.

Each Family Area is delineated by a perimeter of low, flat benches of white marble or possibly concrete. Like the plaza benches, these benches are backless so that visitors can face in or out. A series of 4' tall lights between the perimeter benches serves to illuminate each Family Area. The exterior of these lights is made from the same material as the benches and they are styled to match, with the light facing inward and downward.

The interiors of the Family Areas contain chairs, tables, and conventional benches of a simple design.

The tower footprints are minimally illuminated at night - enough so that visitors can walk safely, but not enough that they appear brightly lit. All lighting for the tower footprints (except the lighting within the Family Areas) is situated on the perimeter.

Glazed Wall Mural
The style of the mural is simple, representational line drawings etched deeply into the glass, not colored. It is clearly visible but not eye-catching. The etching will vary in depth so that it will have shadows and change how it looks depending on how the light reflects off it.

Liberty Wall
This wall is made of rough concrete. The quotations are engraved in letters 2' to 4' high, carved 1" to 2" deep. The exact quotations will be decided at a later time but will not include any quotations less than 25 years old to prevent the politicization of the content of this wall. Room will be left for the possible addition of more recent quotations after sufficient time has passed.

Input from Family Members
Although input from the family members of victims has already been solicited in a general sense, additional input will be needed to complete the memorial. Each family will be asked to supply a birth date, hometown, and a descriptive line for the personal memorial. Family members' input will also be solicited to help make the list of quotations for the Liberty Wall.

Accessibility
The memorial is designed to be completely accessible, with the entire Memorial Plaza at a single level. However, visitors using the elevators or escalators will get a slightly different experience entering the memorial due to the shorter length of time they will spend reaching the plaza. For those with limited mobility, all aspects of the memorial may be reached or viewed within a very small area close to either the elevators or escalators.