

Poetic Project Commemorates 9/11



Carolyn Kluckhuhn Long's poem provides the text for an eight-minute DVD featuring scenes from 9/11. "I hope this work not only memorializes but inspires, not only honors but heals," she says.

by Doug Miller

Like much of the rest of the world, Carolyn Kluckhuhn Long was a prisoner to her television for several days beginning the morning of Sept. 11, 2001.

Even though the terror attacks of that day claimed no one close to her, they nonetheless got to her like nothing else ever has.

"Every minute I was wondering, 'Where's my mother?' 'Where are my children?' I've lived through the Cold War and several other terrible wars, but I never felt like this."

The longtime Columbia resident and one-time marketing director for Rouse Company subsidiary Howard Research and Development ("when there were only four village centers") has turned the anguish she felt that day and her longing to help survivors and surviving family members into an eight-minute DVD.

New York producer Mark Freeh put his arrangements of "America the Beautiful," "Amazing Grace" and "America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)," performed by the New York Staff Band of the Salvation Army and Imperial Brass, together with Long's poetry, read by actor Art Koenig, and a video montage of scenes shot at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the hours and days following the terror attacks.

e poem, "Angels Over America" tells the story of 9/11 in four segments. The first, "Titans," relates the attack on the World Trade Center with the twin towers themselves brought to life as characters in the story:

Their myriad eyes looked on like ours/Transfixed with disbelief/As flaming arrows struck their sides/Till even steel felt grief.

The third segment, "Prayer," contains what Long describes as her favorite passage, which borrows from Abraham Lincoln:

Help the angels of our better natures rise to freedom's song/And lead the charge of justice on her path/So our own avenging angels do not strike in blind revenge/And wreak unbridled ruin with their wrath.

Long says she hopes her work will promote patriotism, as distinct from jingoism.

When the 9/11 attacks commandeered Long's consciousness, she already had a lot on her plate.

She had built a business as a consultant, corporate speaker and seminar leader, fulfilling her mission to bring more humanity and humor to the workplace. Talks also include communications and interpersonal networking skills to help high tech professionals interact more effectively in the business world.

She was working on a much more lighthearted subject at the time, a manual for dogs from the point of view of her own pooch. And she is a professional photographer. But 9/11 took her attention from all of that.

"I felt guilty, being addicted to television," in the aftermath of 9/11, she recalled. "I had to get back to my book, but I couldn't muster the joy."

Slowly, she came to realize she had to put aside her work on other subjects and give voice to her emotions about the horrible day that stole her joy.

"It makes no sense from a marketing or business perspective," she said. "Only in terms of art and heart."

The text of the poem and information on ordering the DVD are available at www.angelsoveramerica.org.