

At tribute, Marathon bombing victims, survivors honored

By **John R. Ellement** and **Martin Finucane** Globe Staff, April 15, 2014, 3:26 p.m.

In a somber but also uplifting ceremony today on the first anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombings, the victims killed in the attacks were remembered, while the courage and compassion were praised of those who aided the survivors, both in the seconds right after the deadly explosions and the ensuing year.

“You have become the face of America’s resolve, not unlike what happened in 9/11 ... for the whole world to see,” said Vice President Joe Biden, praising the city’s resilience in the face of the bombings.

“People know all about you. They know who you are, they know your pride, they know your courage, they know your resolve, they know who you are,” Biden said at the city’s John B. Hynes Memorial Convention Center.

His voice soaring, Biden said that when the Marathon is run again next Monday, “You will send a resounding message around the world ... that we will never yield, we will never cower. America will never, ever, ever stand down. We are Boston. We are America. We respond, we endure, we overcome, and we own the finish line.”

Shortly before 3 p.m., Biden joined another ceremony attended by a crowd of hundreds in pouring rain at the Marathon finish line on Boylston Street as a moment of silence was observed, church bells tolled, and the American flag was raised.

Leading off the ceremony at the convention center, Rev. Liz Walker, pastor of the Roxbury Presbyterian Church and a former local newscaster, spoke passionately about a “rising” of human spirit that would overcome the evil of the bombings.

“There is no way to walk down Boylston Street without thinking about the evil spilling of precious blood. ... But we are also reminded of the amazing capacity of the human spirit to rise in heroism, compassion, and sacrifice,” said Walker.

“There is a rising. A new season, another race, another beginning,” she said. “We must never forget what happened, but we will not be enslaved by the past. It will teach us and lead us boldly to the future.”

She then recited the names of the four people who lost their lives in the bombing and the manhunt for the bombing suspects.

Krystle Campbell, 29, of Arlington; Martin Richard, 8, of Dorchester; and Lingzi Lu, 23, a Chinese graduate student at Boston University, were killed in the twin blasts near the Marathon finish line on April 15, 2013. More than 260 others were injured, some of them suffering grievous injuries that left them teetering near death. Several days after the bombings, the suspects — one of whom is dead and one in federal custody — allegedly killed MIT Police Officer Sean Collier in Cambridge.

The attacks traumatized the region, but also sparked an outpouring of support. First responders and ordinary citizens raced toward danger, rather than away, to help the injured after the explosions; the area’s medical community gave them the best of care; and ordinary people contributed tens of millions of dollars to help the victims.

“We saw people who had come to cheer on the runners instead running themselves to save the lives of perfect strangers,” said Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh.

Walsh offered words of support to Martin Richard’s siblings, Jane, 8, and Henry, 12.

Noting that he came from the same neighborhood as Martin Richard, the mayor said, “In a few days, the Savin Hill Little League will open its season. Martin played in that league with enthusiasm and sheer joy.”

Noting that he had coached in the league, the mayor said he had watched kids improve their skills and confidence and grow to understand “the importance of never giving up.”

“Martin’s older brother, Henry, gets that,” he said. “He’s an exceptional student, a good athlete, a great kid, always eager to help. He’s the kind of kid you want your kids to be friends with.”

He also mentioned Jane, who lost one of her legs in the bombing.

“Now they are teaching us about never giving up,” he said, “And, by the way,” he added to applause, “you didn’t hear it from me, but Jane’s back playing CYO basketball again.”

Biden addressed the victims’ families, who were in the audience, saying, “I thank you for your courage ... and I hope you take some solace from the outpouring of love and affection” from the city and around the country.

Bombing survivor Adrienne Haslet-Davis, a dancer whose leg was amputated after the blast, said, “The city has stood by us, supported us, and helped us heal.”

She said the biggest lesson she had learned is that one’s life can be changed in a single horrific moment. “It is up to us to make sure that every single second after counts because, believe me, they do,” she said.

She said she hoped the day would become not just “a day of remembrance” but a “day of action.”

“Look around. People in your community need your support, they need your patience, and they need your time,” she said. “Let April 15 be a day when we all work together to make this world a better place.”

Tom Grilk, executive director of the Boston Athletic Association, said those who had rushed forward after the attacks had saved “countless lives.”

Grilk asked first responders to stand and be recognized. He then asked the medical community, the volunteers who stepped in to help strangers, and city and state workers to stand. Each time, applause reverberated through the hall.

“Folks, these are heroes,” he said. “Thank you all.”

Governor Deval Patrick also thanked first responders, the medical community and civilians who rushed to help. And he repeatedly used the phrase that “there are no strangers here” to drive home his point that the bombings had united the region.

“We are not strangers. We are, in the end, one community,” Patrick said. “We are not strangers here. We are all connected to each other, to events beyond our control, to a common destiny.”

Former mayor Thomas M. Menino, aided by his cane, walked to the podium and was given an extended standing ovation without prompting from other speakers.

“Thank you very much,” said a clearly emotional Menino, the long-time mayor who was at the helm of the city during the attacks but has since retired.

He called the 12 months since the attacks “a year of grief and recovery.”

He described how survivors and victims’ families have told him about the firsts they have endured since the attacks — the first birthday without a lost loved one, the first time walking on a prosthetic leg, nervousness while hearing Fourth of July fireworks.

Menino addressed survivors of the attacks and those who are planning to run in next Monday’s race

“We will stand with you, remember with you, and never forget what this day means to you.” Menino said. “This day will always be hard. This place will always be strong.”

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