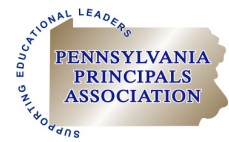


From the Desk of the Incoming Executive Director

A date which will live in infamy...



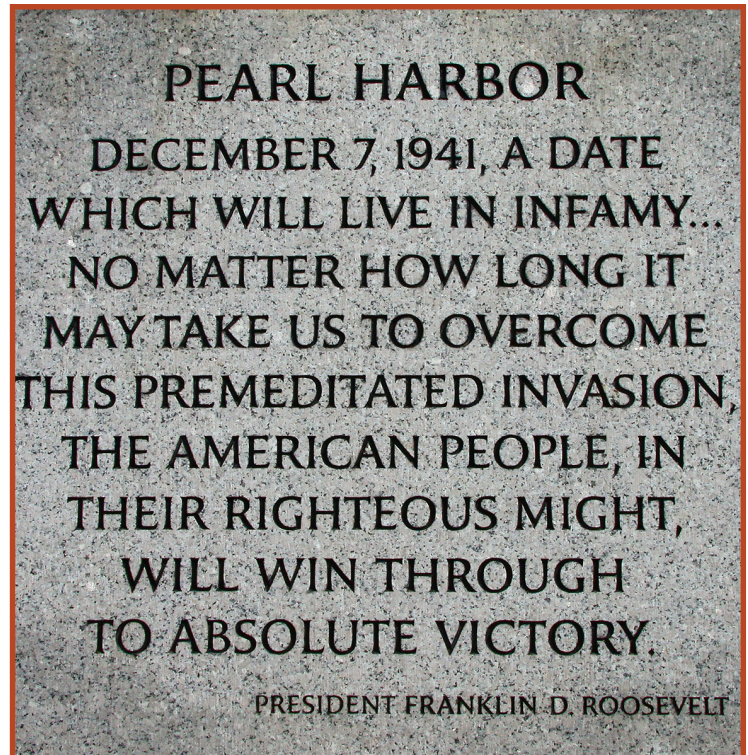
**By Dr. Eric C. Eshbach,
PA Principals
Association
Incoming
Executive
Director**

I was born on December 7, so as a child I often heard people say, “you were born on the date which will live in infamy!” As a young child, I took great pride in knowing my birthday drew such praise. As a pre-teen, I began to gain an understanding that I shared a birthday with the anniversary of the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor 25 years before I was born. In a high school history class, I learned that the phrase, “a date which will live in infamy,” was taken from the speech U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave to Congress the day after the Japanese attack on American troops in Hawaii. I also learned that the word “infamy” was defined as “fame derived from a bad action.” However, it wasn’t until I visited the memorial at Pearl Harbor while I was a student in college, that I was able to truly understand the lasting impact an infamous event has on a nation, a generation and on the heart and soul of our democracy.

This September, we recognize MY generation’s date of infamy, as we remember September 11, 2001. Twenty years after this assault on our nation, I vividly recall where I was when the attacks

occurred and what was running through my mind. I was in my first month as a central office administrator, having just stepped away from my position as an elementary principal. My children had the day off from school and were somewhere with their grandparents, but I had no idea where they were as cell phone coverage was very limited and there were no text messages. When I returned to my office, our schools were calling for advice as to how to announce the event to students and what to do about the onslaught of parents wanting to pick up their children. As you know, this infamous event had huge impacts on our nation, our generation and on the heart and soul of our democracy. For those of us who were administrators during that time, it changed the way we viewed our responsibility to students, families and communities. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that ensued after September 11 ushered in experiences and expectations that were new to us or that we had taken for granted. Experiences such as having children mourn the temporary (or possibly permanent) loss of a parent who was deployed and the joy of welcoming service members to our schools to recognize their deeds became commonplace. The expectations of having plans to keep our students safe and to change our curriculum so our students would remember another infamous date.

As the current generation of school leaders, you have your own date of infamy: March 13, 2020. It reverberates as the date when the pandemic arrived in Pennsylvania schools, closing them for months and changing the way we offer instruction to our students. There are many differences, however, with this infamous event. While December 7, 1941, and September 11, 2001, were devastating days that ushered in years of national turmoil, the impact on schools and how instruction of children is delivered remained relatively unchanged.



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Of course, there were changes in courses of study, but those took years to implement. Additionally, March 13, 2020, ushered in the need for instantaneous change in Pennsylvania schools. Remote learning, Zoom classrooms, hybrid learning, on-line options, social distancing and face coverings are just a few of the changes that occurred ostensibly overnight. This date of infamy continues as we struggle with new variants, new mask mandates and new expectations.

This pandemic has certainly had an impact on our nation, on this generation and on the heart and soul of our democracy. My plea to you is to use YOUR date of infamy as a call to service. Just as Pearl Harbor and the attacks of September 11 served as a call to many to join the armed forces, this pandemic should serve as a call to service for our children. I hear of many teachers and administrators who have chosen to leave education because “this isn’t what they signed up for.” We know that the number of educators choosing to become principals is dwindling because, as they say,

“**The pandemic has certainly had an impact on our nation, on this generation and on the heart and soul of our democracy.**”

“I wouldn’t get paid enough to take that abuse.” You are, no doubt, thankful as am I that the Soldiers and Sailors of previous generations didn’t take that approach after their date of infamy.

It is time for us to demonstrate what it means to be called to serve after an infamous event. It’s time for us to laud the efforts we see each other make to weather the storms of change. It’s time for us to recognize each other as we implement new strategies, new events and new expectations. It’s time for us to seek out the next generation of principals and encourage our best teacher leaders to enter this profession. It’s time for us to

encourage our best and brightest students to become teachers. It’s time for us to sell our profession as the *THE PROFESSION that creates all other professions*. It’s time for us to demonstrate how to serve during infamous times. Our children, our communities and the heart and soul of our democracy depend on it.

‘A Way Out’ To Receive 2021 Service to Children Award

A Way Out, a non-profit organization that provides assistance to survivors of domestic and sexual assault in Potter County, Pa., is the **2021 recipient of the Pennsylvania Principals Association’s Service to Children Award**. This award is presented to individuals, groups or organizations who have had a broad positive impact on all children in our elementary, middle level and high schools. This year’s award recipient was selected from the **Central Region** which includes intermediate units: **8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16** and **17**.

A Way Out was selected for this award for the leadership, commitment and support shown by their employees and volunteers to the students and community of the Galeton Area School District. *A Way Out* has helped to create a safer and healthier community and has proven to be a reliable, efficient and effective advocate for adults and children in need, especially when immediate assistance is crucial.

Nominated for this honor by Galeton High School Principal, Clyde N. Pierce III, *A Way Out* has been of extraordinary benefit to the students of the Galeton Area School District throughout this past year. Their employees and volunteers have assisted several students

escape abusive situations; helped struggling parents wade through complex situations and challenges; and, in some cases, found shelter for those fleeing abusive families and/or individuals.

According to Mr. Pierce, “One such instance involved a student who had been a victim of domestic violence and became homeless. Upon contact, *A Way Out* immediately found emergency shelter, supplied basic living essentials and advocated on behalf of the student at various inter-agency meetings. *A Way Out* has gone above and beyond to assist and care for Galeton Area School District students and families.”

More information about *A Way Out* can be found at: <https://www.myawayout.org/>

