

Becoming a U.S. Citizen on 9/8/01 by Cern Basher, Madison CIO and Co-Founder



Ten years ago on this day, I became a citizen of the United States of America. I was born in New Zealand, raised in Canada and moved to the U.S. on an athletic scholarship to attend university. Upon graduating, I returned to Canada but soon moved to the states to marry, build a family and pursue a career in business.

I remember the citizenship ceremony very well. It was held in a Federal courtroom in downtown Cincinnati. And while quite official, it was also a happy occasion for the dozens of us from many nations becoming citizens that day. I felt a great sense of pride in becoming a U.S. citizen, something I suspect that most people in the world would aspire to be.

In the fall of 2001, Madison Wealth Management was only one-year old. It was an exciting but uneasy time. The internet stock bubble had only recently been deflated. Oil prices were up. And the prior year's election debacle still rankled many. The future didn't seem quite as bright as it had only two years before, but there was still an underlying sense of optimism and hope.

What would happen three days later will be seared in our collective memories forever.

It was a beautiful sunny September day. Then the initial shock and disbelief upon hearing the news. Followed by the images that we will never forget.

Since that day, we have fought two costly wars and suffered through two recessions. Both recessions were related to the 9/11 attacks. The first was caused directly by the attacks and the resulting slowing of economic activity. The second was a consequence of the housing boom fueled by low interest rates used to combat the first recession and by Americans' desire to cocoon themselves in their homes. The ultimate deflating of real estate prices caused the second recession and nearly took down the financial system with it! Thus the 9/11 attacks have proved to be very costly on many levels to our nation.

Yet throughout this ten year period our economy has proved to be very resilient. And, once again, after having endured so much, the future looks a little brighter. Only now, our expectations might be a little more measured as we acknowledge the risks that were always there.

So this Sunday, take a walk outside and look up at the sky (hopefully a clear blue sky where ever you are), and remember that day ten years ago. Remember that what we enjoy in this country today is worth working hard and fighting for.

My Madison colleagues and I honor those who lost their lives on 9/11 and those who have sacrificed since then. The men, women and children in the airplanes, the workers in the World Trade centers, at the Pentagon, the firefighters, the police, the rescue workers, and those serving in our armed forces who have given of themselves so that our way of life may persevere. We honor them as individuals and as Americans by being grateful for what we have, staying hopeful, and working towards a better future.

Lest we forget.

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