

## ENTERTAINMENT

# Columbine survivors, artist offer painting to NY firemen

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Englewood watercolorist Linda Arnold's painting, "Columbine Forever," which she reproduced initially for the families affected by the Columbine tragedy, has sold across the nation and in Europe, raising money for those Columbine families. It has led her into a national network of survivors and a chance to use her artistic talent to help hundreds with healing.

Linda Fenstermacher of Oklahoma City saw the painting on the cover of a national P.E.O. magazine and called her to see if any were left. When Arnold talked with Doreen Tomlin, whose son died in the Columbine library, about the Oklahoma City call, Tomlin told her that Oklahoma City people had rooted 13 cuttings from the Survivor Tree, which sprang back to life after the Murrah Building bombing, and sent them to the local families as a token of their sorrow.

Arnold called Fenstermacher



Linda Arnold, left, presents a painting with Columbine family signatures on back to New York firemen.

Courtesy photos

and told her she would paint a picture for Oklahoma City if she could have a photo of the tree to include. She then learned that the Oklahoma state flower was mistletoe, which didn't seem to work well, but the state wildflower, the Indian blanket, was a bright orange and yellow. That painting features 168 petals, one for each victim, and one shaped like a dove. Dewdrops look like tears and the tree trunk is in the back-

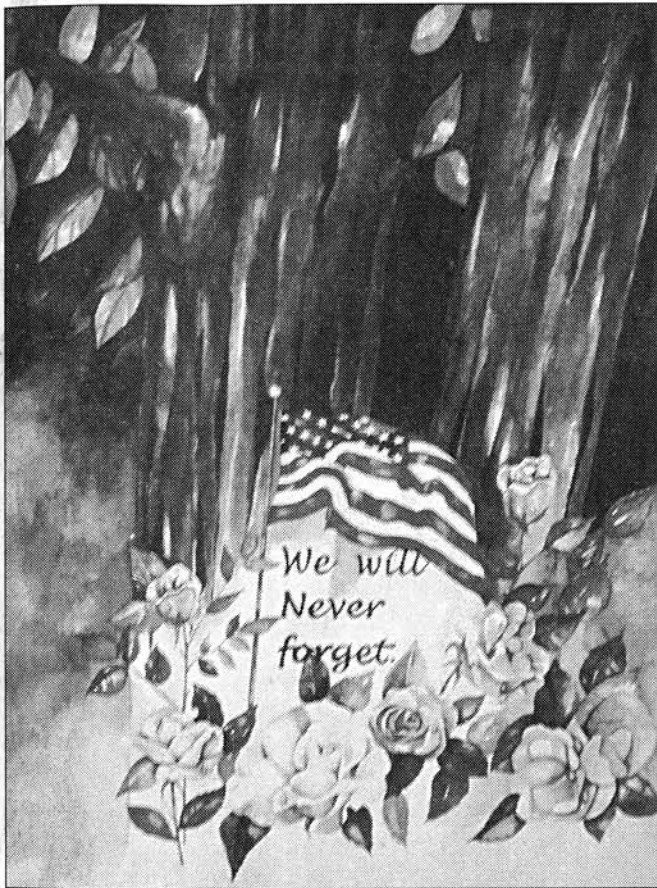
ground. She delivered it this fall.

The Oklahoma City woman suggested she also paint one for New York City. Arnold's first thought was to wonder how she could deliver it. She learned that New York's state flower was a rose and painted seven roses, one for each continent (and she was told that seven buildings were destroyed). She backed the roses with two tree trunks, a symbol others had

mentioned for the World Trade Center towers and an American flag that represents the Pentagon.

Four days after the suggestion of a painting was made, Michael Tamburello called to ask if she would like to go to New York with the Lullaby for Columbine coalition. Frontier Airlines would provide free tickets for the group to go offer help in healing. She said she would create the painting to deliver to the firefighters who lost their comrades. Included in the coalition was Beth Nimmo, mother of Columbine victim Rachel Scott, who spoke to several schools about Columbine and its aftermath.

"I felt like I was taking a giant greeting card to them," Arnold said. Columbine people signed the back of this painting, as well as the one for Oklahoma City. It was delivered to Ladder Company 34, which lost 15 members and now hangs in the firefighter's training academy in Brooklyn, she said, adding that she is really convinced of the power of art to heal.



Arnold said delivering the painting was like taking a giant greeting card to New York survivors.