

NLC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

RISC RISK INFORMATION SHARING CONSORTIUM

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE: FROM THE MURRAH BUILDING RESPONSE TO SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SERVE

Kevin McCullough

October 28 | 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.

April 19, 1995

A Day of Tragedy, Motivation to Serve

Kevin D. McCullough



The road to the bombing

An extremist worldview took hold

Timothy McVeigh
Army and Gulf War veteran; increasingly antigovernment

Ruby Ridge (1992) and Waco (1993) shaped his thinking.

Date chosen: second anniversary of the Waco ending

He saw a symbol.
It was full of people.

The attack

Nine-story building largely destroyed

More than 300

surrounding buildings damaged

The response: one mission, many agencies

When someone needs help, we go.

Responders were members of the attacked community.

Uniforms don’t make us immune
to fear, grief, exhaustion.

The question became

“What can I do to help?”

Fire Chief Gary Marrs used the Incident Command System.

Fire, EMS, police, hospitals, emergency managers,
state and federal partners

No one agency had all the answers.

Relationships built before the crisis

The people who help in a disaster are the ones we work with every day.

Training and practice mattered.

Community and help from across the country

Citizens gave food, water, supplies, time.

The challenge: channel willingness into safe help.

FEMA activated 11 urban search-and-rescue task forces.

Nine NY Task Force 1 members who helped here died on 9/11.



The work didn't end when the rescues did

Recovery continued over two weeks; halted May 5.

Emotional recovery is measured in years.

Responders need care too.

The investigation: ordinary work, extraordinary result

- 90 minutes after: Trooper Charles Hanger stops McVeigh. No license plate; arrests him on a firearm.

Rear axle traced the truck to Junction City.

McVeigh would be able to bond out after his hearing scheduled for April 21.

Jailer Marsha Moritz, who had booked McVeigh into jail and processed his belongings, had seen the composite sketch on TV news and called Sheriff Jerry Cook advising him of the resemblance



You may not know the significance of your work when you do it.

Two events, one day

April 19, 1995: my timeline

9:02 a.m.

Explosion

~11:00 a.m.

Jordan is born

~11:00 p.m.

I arrive at the hospital, after finding a note on the door

Loss and new life. Grief and hope.

Jordan’s joy doesn’t diminish others’ loss.

Same date, forever linked.





The legacy

Service, sacrifice, hope

Four lessons to carry home

1. We are stronger together
2. Every contribution matters
3. Take care of those who take care of others
4. Our service creates a legacy





The Oklahoma Standard

Service
Honor
Kindness

Values to practice daily,
no disaster required.

When you return home, ask yourself

Am I encouraging those around me?

Am I building relationships that make us stronger?

Do I recognize unnoticed contributions?

Do I care for those who care for others?

We remember.
We honor.
We support.
We carry forward.

