



ASSP president will help dedicate Triangle Fire Memorial

PARK RIDGE, IL (Sept. 27, 2023) — The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) is anchored to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire that killed 146 garment workers in New York City more than 100 years ago. ASSP President Jim Thornton will join Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su, New York Governor Kathy Hochul and other dignitaries in honoring those workers on Oct. 11 when a memorial is dedicated at the original building in Manhattan. The event will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET.

The Triangle fire revealed great negligence in worker safety when the tragedy occurred on March 25, 1911. A few months later came the creation of the United Association of Casualty Inspectors, now known as ASSP, the world's oldest professional safety organization.

"The memorial will stand as a symbol to forever remember our nation's legacy of reform while paying tribute to the workers who died," said Thornton, CSP, CIH, FASSP, FAIHA. "It's a significant achievement by the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, whose members worked tirelessly over the past decade to bring the project to fruition."

The main body of the stainless-steel memorial is on a corner of the Brown Building at Washington Place and Greene Street, resembling a ribbon that descends from the 9th floor where most deaths occurred. It evokes the appearance of mourning ribbons that were draped on buildings in times of public grief.

Twelve feet above the sidewalk, the memorial splits horizontally to flank the building's facades, where the names and ages of the victims are stenciled into the ribbon and appear in a reflective panel at street level.

ASSP contributed \$32,519.11 to the memorial's construction, connecting the seven digits of the fire's date (3/25/1911) to emphasize the significant moment in U.S. history. The ASSP Foundation donated an additional \$25,000 to the project. Both names will be listed on a donor plaque affixed to the building near the memorial.

"The Triangle fire inspired our country to address workplace safety in an organized way that didn't previously exist," Thornton said. "The horrific incident led to a series of laws and regulations that better protected workers. And ASSP continues to advance worker safety and health to this day."

During the Triangle disaster, fire exit doors were locked and other doors only opened inward, making it impossible for the onrush of workers to get out. The fire escape was poorly constructed and didn't meet weight requirements. Fire department ladders couldn't reach the upper floors of the 10-story building. Many workers died by jumping out of windows and into an elevator shaft as they tried to escape the flames.

From its inception on Oct. 14, 1911, ASSP has grown into a global membership organization of more than 35,000 occupational safety and health professionals whose efforts reduce workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. But the work of safety organizations, employers and federal agencies is never complete. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 5,000 people were fatally injured on the job in 2021.

"We have always championed the need to protect workers because safety, health and well-being are inherent rights of every worker," Thornton said. "History must continue to motivate us to do better. It takes all of us working together to make sure that tragedies like the Triangle fire never happen again."

Find more information about the Triangle Fire Memorial and the upcoming dedication ceremony on the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition's website at rememberthetrianglefire.org.

About ASSP – Working together for a safer, stronger future

Since 1911, the American Society of Safety Professionals has helped occupational safety and health professionals protect people, property and the environment. The nonprofit society is based in Chicago's suburbs. Its global membership of over 35,000 professionals develops safety and health management systems that prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities. ASSP advances its members and the safety profession by providing member communities, serving as a trusted advisor, and elevating safety through workforce development. Its flagship journal, *Professional Safety*, is a longtime leader in the field. Visit www.assp.org and find us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).