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## PUBLIC LIVES

### For Two 9/11 Memorials, a Man Who Listened

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

JERSEY CITY

FREDERIC SCHWARTZ is standing on a peninsula at Liberty State Park where ground is to be broken tomorrow for the 9/11 memorial he has designed for New Jersey, only three and a half hours after ground is broken in Westchester County for the 9/11 memorial he has designed there. But for a moment, his sad eyes are not focused on the empty sky across the Hudson River where the World Trade Center is supposed to be.

Instead, they are looking across an ineffable inner distance at another terrible image, at another terrible moment. It is May 4, 1970. A photograph is being transmitted around the world that shows Jeffrey Miller, his high school classmate from Plainview, N.Y., lying dead on the ground at Kent State University, killed by the Ohio National Guard.

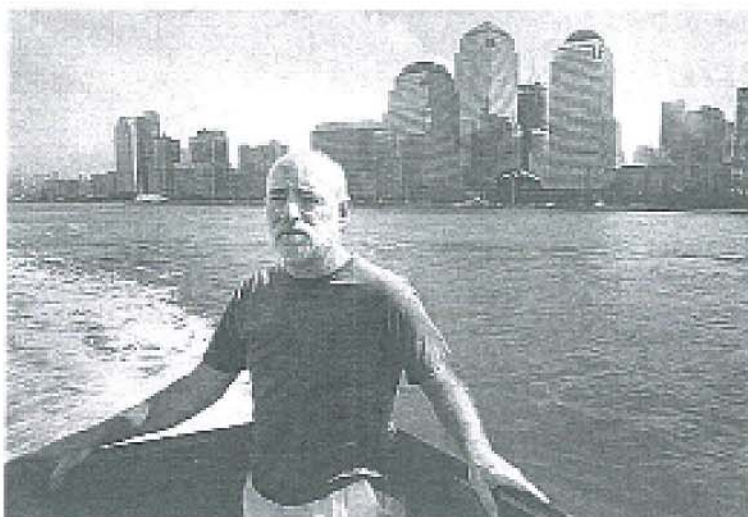
"It was the first time we turned our guns on our own students," Mr. Schwartz said, as if he still had difficulty believing it. He was 19 at the time and a freshman at the University of California at Berkeley, which was itself convulsed. Later, from 1987 to 1991, Mr. Schwartz watched three close friends succumb to AIDS.

Now 53, with a silver beard and a face that does not crease easily into a smile, Mr. Schwartz has been thinking about death, and memorials, or a long time.

He also began thinking about the future of Lower Manhattan, where he lives and works, when before the pall of smoke lifted. After the attack, he was among the architects who stepped in to offer ideas. On Feb. 26, 2003, with the support of a key committee of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, Mr. Schwartz seemed to be within grasp of winning the commission to plan his trade center reconstruction, in a team called Think, with Shigeru Ban, Ken Smith and Rafael Aronov.

But that day, Gov. George E. Pataki declared his preference for the master plan envisioned by architect Daniel Libeskind. The rest is history. Turbulent history.

Today, Mr. Schwartz insists — perhaps a bit too adamantly to be entirely convincing — that his disappointment of losing that commission is



By Ruby Wadby for the New York Times

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FREDERIC SCHWARTZ

behind him. Certainly, he said, his decision to enter the competitions for the New Jersey and Westchester County memorials was not an attempt to recover from a missed opportunity. "There was no conscious thinking, 'I lost this, so I'm going to do that,'" he said.

Instead, he said, public work is simply his lifeblood, the kind of work generated by competitions that level the field a bit so that small firms like his, with 15 employees, can stand a chance against the giants. "I've been working for 25 years in the public realm," Mr. Schwartz said. "It's the way I can give back."

He was born in Jamaica, Queens, about 10 blocks from the South Jamaica Houses, where he is now designing a community center. Growing up in Plainview, he watched one house after another rise in the potato fields on the eastern edge of Nassau County, and happily appropriated empty refrigerator boxes to make houses of his own.

If the architect in him was cultivated early, so was the political advocate. After a high school social studies teacher introduced him to a labor counselor in Riverhead, Mr. Schwartz staged a boxing match and rock concert in the school gymnasium to benefit migrant farm workers.

At Berkeley, he studied under and befriended Joseph Esherick, who had no use for signature architectural styles, declaring that "the ideal kind of building is one you don't see." Mr. Schwartz's tales of Berkeley far outnumber stories of Harvard, where he earned his master's degree. "A great education, but it didn't have a social conscience," he said.

He worked at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, then at Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown, on the park planned atop the Hudson River landfill that the Westway highway was to run through. Opponents called the park a mirage. Westway was scrapped in 1985, and Mr. Schwartz says to this day that it "whole generation of children lost a place to play."

That year, with Ross Anderson, Mr. Schwartz formed Anderson-Schwartz Architects. The practice, now simply Frederic Schwartz Architects, is at 180 Varick Street. Mr. Schwartz walks there from a loft in SoHo that he shares with Tracey Hammer, a writer on art and architecture.

In April, the Westchester County executive, Andrew J. Spano, named Mr. Schwartz the designer of the county memorial at Kenesaw Dam Plaza in Valhalla. Two months later, Gov. James E. McGreevey named him the architect of the New Jersey memorial.

Each memorial will be made of stainless steel and inscribed with victims' names. Otherwise, they could not be much less alike. The New Jersey memorial will consist of parallel walls, 30 feet high and 200 feet long, arranged at an angle that will direct visitors' eyes toward ground zero. In Westchester, 100 rods, for the number of victims from the county, will intertwine in a tapering, 80-foot pinnacle, directing eyes upward.

Mr. Schwartz credits the differences between the designs to his having listened to the needs and aspirations of the victims' relatives, friends and co-workers — and having not arrived with a preconceived aesthetic approach. "You start over each time," Mr. Schwartz said. "You do serious research, delve into the site, into the problem. It's antistyle. I'm not consciously trying to be antistyle, but I think that's the right way to do it."

It is a nod to Professor Esherick. And of a moment at Berkeley that time has not dimmed.