



Memory Lane Exhibit

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012 La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Dawson Building; 401 Carroll Street

April 28, 2002



The original structure was built in 1990 and named in honor of Dawson Perry Norris the mother of the builders. The structure was reconstructed basically the same as the original structure with a few improvements. The building consists of seven units ranging in size from 540 square feet to 720 square feet. It is a condominium type ownership with each unit individually owned though one individual owns several of the units. All of the occupants were displaced during the reconstruction. The tornado lifted the whole roof assembly and turned it several inches and also tore off about forty feet of the building. Fortunately none of the occupants were killed or injured. There was also considerable damage on the inside of the building. The building was reconstructed under the guidance of Buddy Norris one of the owners.

April 28, 2012



The building is back better than ever with several improvements. There are a variety of occupants representing several small businesses. The building is carrying out its purpose by providing space for individual businesses that need more than a home office but not a complete building of their own.



TORNADO of **2002**

A Closer & Stronger Community

★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Nancy Gasparovic, Title Professionals, Ltd.; 114 La Grange Avenue

April 28, 2002



Easy to remember the date since it's my birthday and what may have saved my life. I was at my office, fully engrossed in my work when my cell phone rang just before 7:00 pm. My neighbor said "This is embarrassing – I have a cake with your name on it and you're not here!" I left quickly! The next morning when I got in behind police lines, trees uprooted, power lines down, etc. to retrieve half million or so in checks I HOPED were still there, I discovered shards of glass, roofing material, etc literally embedded in the wall behind where I had been sitting about 5 to 8 minutes before the tornado...

Originally a home built in the 1950's, it became office space in 1970's. I acquired the small office of less than 1,000 square feet in 1998 and restored it including moldings, original fireplace, and special architectural features. After the tornado, I had the opportunity to expand and restore it again!

The story of the Bible that flew in with the debris is our most inspiring story as it is bookmarked at Ezra 3 "Rebuilding of the Temple." The whole town has indeed been REBUILDING and it's truly a miracle that we've rebuilt buildings and didn't have tremendous loss of human life. The Bible is now secured in a case prominently displayed for 10 years. Called the town's "symbol of a miracle" it must be seen to believe.

April 28, 2012



The restoration of "The Little House That Stood" is now home to expanded Title Professionals office and 4 commercial/residential suites. Featured on the MD House and Garden Pilgrimage tour in 2004, a charming cottage garden anchors the old and new sections and is a respite for employees and residents alike. Though tripled in size, it retains its original charm and, as viewed from La Grange Avenue, many remark you can't tell it's an addition! You're invited to tour the office as part of the town's celebration.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012 La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Centennial Street Development; 305 Centennial Street



April 28, 2002

K&S Associates owned a four unit rental property in a two story frame building that was significantly damaged by the tornado. This was an investment property that was covered by insurance, therefore it did not have an adverse financial impact on our business.

April 28, 2012

The former four unit rental property was replaced by a seven unit high end residential complex and a four unit commercial/office complex. The tax assessment and property tax revenues to the Town was increased significantly. The rebuilding project was a dramatic change to the Town and has made downtown La Plata a much more desirable destination.



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★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Chapman & Bowling LLC; 112 La Grange Avenue
Auto Accident/Criminal Defense/Estate Planning



Photo courtesy of Wildes-Spirit Design and Printing



April 28, 2002

Chapman & Bowling has always focused our law practice on helping people and businesses obtain compensation for injuries and financial loss. The tornado truly allowed us to experience the impact of a sudden and unexpected loss of our property and those losses to our neighbors. We were relocated for over a year, but our business remained strong with all the assistance and support of the Town of La Plata and our loyal clients.

April 28, 2012

All of the events related to the tornado made everyone in our firm work harder to take care of the needs of our clients and appreciate that we were spared further damage and loss of life. Chapman & Bowling was able to expand our location and bring technological updates to our office. Moreover, La Grange Avenue and the surrounding streets have been rebuilt in a fashion that is more accessible to the citizens while preserving the heritage of the Town of La Plata.

www.ChapmanBowling.com



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

The La Grange Building; 109 La Grange Avenue

April 28, 2002



The La Grange Building was originally built in 1950 by Albert and Laura Hyde. It began as a printing shop with two apartments above. After Mr. Hyde's death the building was sold in 1972. The building was then completely renovated and the warehouse portion of the building was converted to office space. The second story continued to be used as apartments. It was devastating to see the tenants displaced from their homes and businesses, but luckily no one was in the building at the time of the tornado. Happily new apartments were found for the residential tenants and two or three of the commercial tenants relocated to temporary space.

April 28, 2012



Fortunately with the encouragement of the Town of La Plata the building was back bigger and better. With the guidance and encouragement from the town what was a tragic devastation turned into a great opportunity to build back better than ever. Previously it was a masonry block building, today it is a brick and masonry building, with a modern sprinkler system, wired for internet and modern communications and offering 3 larger apartments than the original building. The building was bought by Marty and Caroline Martin in 2004 and they continue to operate it today.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012
La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

101 La Grange Avenue

April 28, 2002

April 28, 2012



La Plata Post Office



La Plata Police Department

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Mote Management; 5 Oak Avenue

April 28, 2002



Remarkably, Mote Management only experienced minimal damage from the tornado, in comparison to the devastation that impacted much of Oak Avenue. The front porch was destroyed, a portion of the roof was damaged and multiple windows were blown out, which resulted in massive dirt, debris and papers littering the interior of the office. The office was closed Monday, April 29th and reopened the next day utilizing generator power. Internet service was restored on Wednesday and building repairs commenced on Thursday. Within a month, all repairs were complete at Mote Management.

April 28, 2012



We will never forget seeing the aerial news coverage of the devastation on Oak Avenue...our yellow office building was still standing and recognizable, while four homes and offices around us were virtually destroyed. Such is the random nature of a tornado. What was not random was how the community came together to rebuild a better La Plata, which we all enjoy today.



TORNADO of **2002**

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★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012 La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

The Boyce Residence; 201 Oak Avenue

April 28, 2002



On April 28th, 2002, We had our sister-in-laws car packed and ready to go to Tennessee the next day when the tornado hit. I had been watching the weather that afternoon on TV and said to my wife that the storm was going north of us—to Waldorf. At that time I heard noise at the back door and told my wife to get in our master bedroom closet immediately. For some reason I knew immediately what was happening. We both were in the closet when we heard the noise and stayed there till all the noise had ended. It happened so fast and it was over. At the time we had a house under construction in Tennessee, so we had our sister-in-laws car repaired and then went to Tennessee. We also were able to hire a family member to be a general contractor to rebuild our house here while we were gone.

April 28, 2012



We are stronger today because of all the help we got from the community, organizations and businesses that were here the next few days, weeks and months helping everyone. Even the Amish folks came and volunteered their time to help the community rebuild. After our house was finished being rebuilt, we let another local family live in our house while their house was being redone and we went to Tennessee again. The whole community and surrounding communities came together to help. That really brought the whole area together and fostered a stronger, closer relationship with everyone.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012
La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

100 Oak Avenue

April 28, 2002



The Pride Residence

April 28, 2012



The Norris Residence



TORNADO of 2002

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★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Dash In; 601 Charles Street

April 28, 2002



Photo courtesy of Wildes-Spirit Design and Printing

Working and perched right in the path of the oncoming tornado, employees of the La Plata Dash In braced for the oncoming “train”. They knew this train was different, not like the trains that passed the store on a daily basis. The manager Pat Frazier instructed the employees to immediately go into the bathroom, which harbored four interior walls, and closed the door, not knowing what to expect. When they emerged unharmed, the damage was extensive and the roof was gone. They were afraid as they had never been through anything like this, but were unharmed.

The building was completely ruined. All merchandise had to be cleared, all equipment scrapped, and the property leveled. It was several months before damage estimates, blueprints, and plans were put in place to rebuild the business on this site. The employees were able to find work in other Dash In stores and were fortunate to continue working.

La Plata is vibrant and the support that all citizens gave to each other during and after the tornado is remarkable. Everyone knew that La Plata would be rebuilt.

April 28, 2012



Today, on the same site and right in the middle of town, Dash In employees continue to serve their customers the same way they did before the tornado. The difference now is a brand new building with new equipment and a new look. La Plata was the first store built of a series of prototype Dash In stores that continue to serve the needs of convenience customers every day.

The phoenix from the destruction is this new design and layout that is more efficient and convenient for the customer, a building that is greener in its energy consumption, and a modern design. New materials and construction methods makes this Dash In one of a kind. And, it represents a future that is bright for everyone in the Town of La Plata!



TORNADO of 2002

A Closer & Stronger Community

★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Civista Medical Center; 5 Garrett Avenue



April 28, 2002

The tornado that swept through Charles County on April 28 left our community devastated and in a state of shock. However, that night at Civista Medical Center our employees rose to the occasion.

As the storm approached, the patients were quickly moved to safety and a remote triage area was set up in anticipation of multiple casualties. After the tornado hit, patients starting arriving by foot and in the back of pick-up trucks as well as by ambulance. With an influx of 70 victims in a very short period of time the emergency department staff and many other employees did an outstanding job rendering care to those who were injured. Our employees, physicians and volunteers rallied together and truly showed the meaning of a “community” hospital.

April 28, 2012



The history of Civista Health is a story of a community in action. Our hospital was built because of the deadly tornado that ripped through Charles County in 1926.

Recognizing the desperate need for a hospital to serve its people, the citizens of Charles County banded together to make a community hospital a reality. That same sense of community still continues today. With a priority focus on patient safety, quality and sustainability, the county’s only hospital has made significant strides to provide excellent care for our community right here in Charles County.

Our new affiliation with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) provides the needed resources to increase services and extend our outreach bringing the finest in healthcare to Charles County and the citizens of southern Maryland.



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Martin's Service Station; 309 Charles Street



April 28, 2002

Martin's is a family owned and operated business that has served the Town of La Plata and surrounding areas since 1922. We are third generation, and to see the business that your father and grandfather worked so hard to build destroyed by a tornado is devastating.

Our building was totally destroyed and had to be rebuilt from the ground up. We were fourteen months rebuilding, and during that time we were fortunate enough that our loyal customers stood by us, and we worked out of our home shop.

April 28, 2012

We had considered rebuilding before the storm, but it was not feasible for us. Our old building did not meet some of the new codes and was not handicapped accessible in some areas. Once we got over the initial shock and got through the insurance process, it was exciting to plan and construct a new, more modern, and larger building. We were able to double our size and add a gift shop in the front.

The support we received from the community was greatly appreciated, and it was that support, our determination to rebuild and the goodness of God that gave us the strength to get through those 14 months of rebuilding. I would like to think that we are stronger because of this experience.



TORNADO of 2002

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★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

The Carrico Building; 303 Charles Street

April 28, 2002



The Carrico Building was built in 1907 as the New Wills Hotel. Over the years it was converted into office and apartments. Rudolf and Thomas Carrico operated their law practices from the first floor when they purchased the building in 1956. As the building approached the Century mark in 2002, it was showing its age. The Carrico family was beginning to investigate the possibility of renovating or selling when the building sustained severe damage, but remained intact after the tornado. Having survived a near direct hit, we decided to rehabilitate and modernize the building. When we reopened exactly two years after the tornado we retained the mix of first floor offices, with apartments on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

April 28, 2012

The 7 children of Rudolf and Thomas Carrico were committed to preserving the historical character of the structure, and also creating an aesthetically pleasing modernized building in the middle of La Plata. The building expanded on the 1st and 2nd floors by creating new space within the original footprint. The entry foyer has been enhanced with tile flooring and an elevator, which complements the old staircase and the front door that survived the tornado. The furnace and radiators have been replaced by individual HVAC units for each apartment and office.

Hardwood flooring was installed in the upstairs apartments and hallways. The kitchens and bathrooms boast modern appliances, fixtures and tile. The building has new windows, insulation and sprinklers. The new exterior siding and lighting were designed to preserve the character of the building while also providing a “facelift”.

The Carrico family and the Town have a new building to be proud of, both inside and out. It is rewarding to hear all the positive comments since we reopened on April 28, 2004.



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012 La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Baldus Real Estate; 101 E. Charles Street

April 28, 2002



Photo courtesy of Wildes-Spirit Design and Printing.

Bonnie Baldus Grier was working in the office on that Sunday evening trying to finish up a real estate contract for a client. "The lights flashed and I hit the save button on the computer," she recalled. "I looked out the back door of the office but I looked the wrong way. If I had gone out and looked from the parking lot out front I would have seen the darn thing coming. I looked out the window and I saw horizontal debris flying by," she said. "I got down on my stomach and covered my head and it just hit. After awhile I got up and opened the door to my office and the second wave hit so I hit the deck again."

Bonnie was extremely lucky that she was not seriously injured when the tornado hit the building. "When it was done I looked down the hall and I saw an 8-foot hole in the roof. I could see daylight," she said. "It shattered all of the windows in the front and stuff was blown everywhere."

One of the Baldus buildings was flattened by the tornado and the other building was damaged beyond repair. The family moved the business to a temporary location in the T.R. Farrall building on Maple Avenue that used to be the home of Mrs. Baldus' grandparents.

April 28, 2012



The Baldus' quickly set to rebuilding Baldus Center at the same location where the destroyed buildings stood. The center opened in April 2005 and holds Baldus Real Estate, Old Line Bank and several other small businesses.



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012
La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Burger King; 6720 Crain Highway



April 28, 2002

Quick thinking and teamwork kept everyone safe in the storage room.



April 28, 2012

**You can't stop
the WHOPPER!**



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012
La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Charles County Rescue Squad; 2 Calvert Street

April 28, 2002



April 28, 2012



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012 La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Charles County Four Square Church; 1 Calvert Street



April 28, 2002

What the tornado did not destroy, the La Plata water tower did. It came down on what was Dick Wildes Printing business. The addition that was built in 1983 was literally blown apart by the water tower dropping its contents - 75,000 gallons of water - in a matter of seconds. The building was totally destroyed.

April 28, 2012



A new building was constructed and is now occupied by the Charles County Four Square Church.



TORNADO of **2002**

A Closer & Stronger Community

★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Mitchell Building - 200 Howard Street

April 28, 2002



The Mitchell Building, cornering St. Mary's Avenue and Howard Street, was built in 1998. It was the original site of Tony's Restaurant & Bar, whose proprietors Tony, Lena and Sam Vacchiano provided food and drink to La Plata town folk. The first floor of the two story office building, at the time of the tornado, was home to attorney firms and other businesses. The corporate and sales offices of MSI, Inc. were located on the second floor.

The building took a direct hit, knocking out seventy some windows and glass doors before exiting the street front through the roof. This building also suffered damage as a result of the 75,000 gallon water tower twisting, tumbling and emptying thousands of gallons of water on our parking lot and in the building.

Structurally the building was deemed sound and work began immediately to clean up, dry-out and rebuild so tenants could return home ASAP. By July 2002, the building was re-occupied.

April 28, 2012



We believe we are all stronger today having experienced this horrific act of God. We know the strength of the building because of its survival to both wind and water. We appreciate the location of this building, in its effort to shield the original MSI Building on St. Mary's Ave (circa 1940) from total collapse. We are forever grateful to all who came to our aid and worked tirelessly in our efforts to rebuild. We stand today on the same corner of St. Mary's Avenue and Howard Street. Our structure outwardly mirrors the building prior to 7:04 pm, April 28, 2002 and continues to provide commercial space for the Greer Law Firm and other thriving businesses.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012
La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Mitchell's - 6 St. Mary's Avenue - The Greene Turtle



Aerial view of Mitchell's 10,000 sq. ft. retail store circa 1988

April 28, 2002



Aerial view of Mitchell's 10,000 sq. ft. store April 30, 2002



TORNADO of 2002

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Today



Original Mitchell Supply store 1961
Home now to County First Operations Ctr., Yarn Shop, MS Vicky's,
house Boutique and Halo Salon



The Greene Turtle 2006
7500 sq. ft. of restaurant and bar complete with an outside patio
"Meet you at the Turtle"

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Mudd, Mudd & Fitzgerald, P.A.; 106 St. Mary's Avenue

April 28, 2002



The wind of the La Plata Tornado of April 28, 2002 scattered the second level of the Mudd, Mudd, & Fitzgerald Law Office in all directions, swept through its first floor, relocating throughout the Town anything not nailed down and blew away in its entirety a detached structure housing the law office of F. Lee Holdman. Books from the office's law library, client files on desks of attorneys and staff, wall hangings, staff's personal desk ornaments, etc. were found scattered about the inside and outside of the building as well as on the properties of adjacent and more remote neighbors. Virtually all furnishings were scarred, otherwise damaged or rendered worthless. Bookkeeping and records maintained on the second floor were found as far away as Seaford, Delaware and gratefully returned by astonished residents on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

The building housing the Law Office of Mudd, Mudd, & Fitzgerald was constructed in 1894 by United States Senator Sydney E. Mudd. In 1983 it was acquired in a dilapidated state by members of the firm and restored and renovated to accommodate the needs of the firm. Following the tornado, considerable thought was given to preserving the original premises. Mudd, Mudd & Fitzgerald was back in business in early May of 2002 serving its clients from temporary facilities located on the north side of Charles Street opposite the Civista Hospital.

The response to the crisis by the attorneys, their family members, the firm's employees and their family members, clients and friends was overwhelming; even passersby with virtually no association with the attorneys, the staff or their families stopped and pitched in to assist in sifting through debris, to lend a hand to pull furniture from the rubble, etc. True to tradition, the Amish community descended upon the town moving from property to property to assist wherever they could.

Today

Although unable to preserve the 1894 structure, a new office exteriorly replicating the 1894 structure was opened for business in July 2003. Original siding, window trim, door hardware, mantels, foundation brick and the like salvaged from the destruction were incorporated in the new facility. Several interior spaces were meticulously copied to the original areas. Enlargements, enhancement and redesign of interior space has produced a brand new building with a floor plan more conducive to the practice of law than that of the 1894 structure.

In 2007, Mudd, Mudd & Fitzgerald celebrated its 100th year of providing legal services to the residents of the Town of La Plata and the Southern Maryland Community. The venerable home of congressman Mudd proudly stood for 108 years finally succumbing to the force of Mother Nature. The attorneys and staff of Mudd, Mudd & Fitzgerald intend to do their part to continue the traditions of the building from which they have served their community and to continue and pass on to future generations the law practice commenced by John F. Mudd in the Town of La Plata in 1907.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

County First Bank; 202 Centennial Street

April 28, 2002

County First Bank's Main Office, including the Loan Department, was destroyed by the tornado. The Bank's Operation Center, where all of the check processing, wire transfers, and back-room operations take place was also destroyed. The Bank President was in the intersection of Routes 301 and 6 when the tornado struck, and narrowly escaped.

The day after the tornado, the Bank President called in his troops and established a plan to keep the bank operating without cutting any jobs. Our Waldorf location became our Main Office - the lenders worked out of their cars and homes, a Proof machine was salvaged and brought to Waldorf to process the daily work, and the La Plata tellers reported to the Bank's other locations so that our customers saw a familiar face. The Bank branches were open the day after the tornado, operating with good 'ole calculators. Although it was well after midnight when the day's work was settled out, County First Bank never skipped a beat!

April 28, 2012

The 2002 F4 tornado temporarily turned our lives upside down; however it also brought our community closer together. Everyone, from the President on down, was part of the clean-up crew. Members of the Amish community worked tirelessly for days helping in the bank's clean-up. A few weeks after the tornado, County First Bank was up and operating in three temporary trailers, primarily due to the efforts of Paul V. Facchina, Sr. Our trailer served as a full service branch, one housed the loan department, and one senior officers and staff. Employees endured frozen pipes and at times, no operating bathrooms, but never lost hope, because our new bank building was under construction and could be seen from the trailer windows.

Prior to the tornado, the Bank was outgrowing its space. Ironically, the rebuild from the tornado allowed the bank to expand the upstairs square footage, thus creating additional office space. The Bank hosted a Tornado Anniversary party on April 28, 2003 to celebrate the resilience of the business community. We all shared a special bond because it would have been easy to give up, but instead, we rebuilt. As a result of our efforts, in early June 2003, County First employees proudly moved into new Bank headquarters.



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Drs. DiLorenzo and Hrechka Office; 113 La Grange Avenue

April 28, 2002



The 2002 tornado totally destroyed our office. Fortunately, from the devastation we were able to salvage the paintings my father had painted. He passed away a year ago at the age of 100, and I am grateful to have the paintings as a pleasant reminder of him. Also six months prior to the tornado we had completely renovated our building and had to close our office for about six weeks.

Fortunately we were able to transfer our patients to our Fort Washington office until our temporary office was opened in “Facchina Park”. We owe a lot of gratitude for Paul Facchina for helping to keep the business community together.

April 28, 2012



Out of every disaster comes some good. The new buildings have enhanced our community and created a more favorable work place.

I am enjoying being able to work in my new office and the whole business community has been upgraded so that we are no longer a small country town. We have more shops and restaurants which are important in creating a viable environment.



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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012 La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Norris Building; 115 La Grange Avenue

April 28, 2002



The original building was a frame building with vinyl siding. It was constructed in 1979 and was named in honor of Howard M. Norris, Jr. the father of the owners. The building was completely destroyed by the tornado and all of the tenants were displaced until the building could be rebuilt. Fortunately no one involved with the building was killed or injured. The building was reconstructed and opened again in 2003.

April 28, 2012



The new structure has an attractive brick façade, roof dormers and many interior improvements that were not in the original building such as chair rail and other moldings. It also is now wired properly for the internet and modern communications. It offers office suites from 500 sq. ft to 1200 sq. ft. It is very heartening to know that 3 of the occupants from the original building are still in the new building. Though the storm was a tragedy it afforded the opportunity to build back a better structure.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

La Plata Shopping Center; 6605 - 6665 Crain Highway

April 28, 2002



The southern end of La Plata Shopping Center received the bulk of the damage from the tornado on April 28th, 2002. The KFC was unrecognizable as the entire building was destroyed. The road sign at the 301 entrance was mangled and later replaced with the existing new sign. The Bank of Southern Maryland (which occupied the True Value space) was destroyed along with the CVS roof (currently Outback). Other businesses within the center were generally open for business by April 30th as shopping center repairs commenced.

April 28, 2012



Eventually the center was completely renovated and redesigned to house a variety of new shops and restaurants. Though the devastation from the tornado was a huge misfortune for the town, businesses and residents, La Plata has emerged ten years later as a better place boasting a renewed sense of community.



TORNADO of 2002

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★ La Plata, MD ★

April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

Archbishop Neale School; 104 Port Tobacco Road

April 28, 2002



When the tornado's devastation became fully apparent, all in the Archbishop Neale community (families, faculty, staff, alumni) felt a deep sense of loss. Perhaps worse than the sense of loss, however, was the uncertainty. No one knew if there was a future for this school that had been so important to generations in and around La Plata for over 75 years. Just as quickly as the rubble and dust settled however, the ANS community banded together to ensure that Catholic education in La Plata would continue to thrive. Our community was not only made stronger through this tragedy, but also expanded. We were deeply touched by the outpouring of support—emotional, spiritual, and material—which allowed us to continue in our mission, only missing seven days of school! While devastating in the short term, the tornado on April 28, 2002, served to reaffirm our faith and our unique role in the history of the town of La Plata.

April 28, 2012



Immediately prior to the tornado, Archbishop Neale School had undertaken a major effort to raise funds for substantial building upgrades. After April 28, 2002, that effort became a rebuilding project. In the words of one of our former students, Allie, a 5th grader at the time of the tornado, "ANS is special to me because our school building was destroyed but we are still here together in a classroom learning even though we are no longer in that building. This reminds me that no matter what happens to our building, we still stand strong." Through many months of blood, sweat, tears, and prayers, we achieved our goal and a beautiful new school now stands in place of the one that was destroyed. Along with reinforced walls, steel, bricks and mortar that make our building stronger, we as a faith community are stronger as well. ANS is continuing the tradition that the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary began almost 85 years ago: teaching children in the Catholic faith, fostering a life-long commitment to Gospel values, academic excellence, and service to others.



TORNADO of 2002

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April 28, 2002 — April 28, 2012

La Plata TEN YEARS STRONGER

La Plata United Methodist Church; 3 Port Tobacco Road



April 28, 2002

Fortunately, no one was in the building when the tornado hit La Plata United Methodist Church, because the damage was profound. The entire second story of the education wing was destroyed. The church did have a flat roof on that wing, and whether that contributed to the damage or whether, as some suspect, the old barbecue shed was picked up and flung into the building we do not know, but everything on that floor was lost. All the windows were blown out of the sanctuary, glass was shot everywhere inside the sanctuary, the lighting fixtures were swung around and ripped from the ceiling. The old steeple was torn from the roof and landed sideways in the yard, exposing the historic bell. The roof itself was lifted up and moved over several inches while most of the shingles were ripped off. Every room in the church sustained some kind of damage.

April 28, 2012



The tornado was a blessing in disguise. The people of the congregation rallied together to support each other and the community. They were able to repair the sanctuary in about 9 months, and rebuilt the education wing by the end of 2003. The sixty year old church is now virtually brand new. The repairs to the education wing led to the addition of the new entry area that also houses an elevator, which reaches all four levels. Working together to restore the church strengthened the ties members had to each other, and strengthened the church's ties to the community. The church is now thriving and serving the community in ways it did not do before. The tornado was the beginning of a season of renewal, renovation and recommitment that continues to bless this congregation today and will into the future.



TORNADO of **2002**
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