



Terri Severin's book dedicated to those who died in crash of flight 4184

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ROSELAWN | Today, Terri Severin will make the trip from her suburban Chicago home to a Newton County cornfield where she and family members and friends of those who perished in American Eagle flight 4184 annually gather.

Over the years since the Oct. 31, 1994, crash, the anniversary's meaning has shifted, Severin said, moving to a celebration of life and the lives of those lost.

This year, Severin's trip is notable because the 14-year journey has resulted in her book, "In the Wake of the Storm: Living Beyond the Tragedy of Flight 4184," which was released in August.

"I never expected I'd write a book," said Severin, who works in a high school counseling department. The book is the evolution of her original decision to document stories of her sister's life for her surviving son. Her sister and a nephew were killed in the crash.

The book is about ordinary people facing extraordinary circumstances.

"It is a testimonial to the transformative power of hope," Severin said. Her life and the lives of family and friends of the 64 passengers and four crew members were changed forever that day.

"What I've learned through this is that there is a beginning and an end to everything," Severin said.

The book is just the latest in a long list of positive ways Severin has faced the tragedy.

Severin was instrumental in legislative changes for the airline industry, including the Family Assistance Act of 1997, which requires greater airline safety and response training.

A co-founder of the National Air Disaster Alliance and co-chairman of Families of 4184, Severin has been a guest lecturer for response training sessions in the airline industry and a speaker at international symposiums for the Family Assistance Foundation.