Steel 'cross' will stay at WTC memorial: court

Friday, August 1, 2014
By: Rich Calder, New York Post
The World Trade Center Cross, made of intersecting steel beams found in the rubble of the buildings destroyed in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks will stay.



There will be no separation between this steel "cross" and the World Trade Center memorial.

The Second Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday rejected a bid by American Atheists Inc. to remove the famed cross-shaped steel beams that survived the 9/11 attacks from the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.



The federal appeals panel sided with Manhattan federal Judge Deborah Batts' ruling last year that the relic's historical importance outweighs potential concerns over issues of separation of church and state.

"[Given] the absence of any evidence of ulterior religious motives, and the undisputed historical significance of The Cross at Ground Zero, we conclude that, as a matter of law, the record compels the conclusion that the actual purpose of displaying the cross in the September 11 Museum is a genuine secular interest in recounting the history of extraordinary events," the panel wrote.

The atheist group had sued the Port Authority and museum operators in 2011 — roughly three years before the museum opened in March underneath a national memorial dedicated to documenting the history of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the heroic rescue and recovery efforts that followed.

The historic artifact is a 17-foot, 4,000-pound steel crossbeam shaped like a Latin cross that was found by excavator Frank Silecchia. The Rev. Brian Jordan, a Franciscan priest who performed rites at Ground Zero, blessed the cross as a point of refuge.