

August 3, 2006

Dear Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of Greater Rochester:

It is hard to believe, but it has been almost ten years since the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Highland Park South, 1440 South Avenue. Each and every one of you, in some way, made contributions, large and small, to the Memorial that stands on hallowed ground today. For this reason, on behalf of the Board of Directors, it is our pleasure to invite you to attend a series of special events planned for the weekend commemorating the ten year anniversary of the dedication of the Memorial. Many in our community refer to the Memorial as a "jewel" that will forever honor and remember the 280 men from Monroe County and the five surrounding counties who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. As last Medal of Honor Recipient, Roy Benavidez, now deceased, reminded us ten years ago in 1996, "We are here today because these 280 men gave all of their tomorrows for our todays". The schedule of events for Friday, September 8th; Saturday, September 9th; and Sunday, September 10th follows:

- Please join us for an informal gathering of all who have volunteered or have given of their time, talent, and/or treasure at the Memorial on Friday, September 8th at 6:00 p.m. to reconnect, remember and reunite on the actual date of the ten year anniversary.
- A large scale public event targeted for families, students, teachers, veterans, and citizens from all walks of life to celebrate the educational focus of this living Vietnam Veterans Memorial is planned for Saturday, September 9th at 10:00 a.m., continuing to 4:00 p.m. The day includes a variety of activities, including an early morning landing and afternoon departure of a UH-1 Huey helicopter, static military displays, educational tours, refreshments, entertainment and VVM merchandise. A special commemorative ten year anniversary poster will be available. The poster is designed (pro bono) by Carol Culhane, spouse of US Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran, Jerry Culhane. Carol will be there to sign copies of the poster for those who wish to purchase one. Proceeds will go to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In addition, a candlelight vigil with the reading of the names will commence from dusk until midnight by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 20.

- On Sunday, September 10th at 1:30 p.m. Father Michael Bausch, Pastor of Church of the Transfiguration and Chair of the Greater Rochester Council of Churches, will lead us in prayer with 17 interdenominational religious faiths represented. This remembrance is part of the ongoing healing process. The service should last approximately one hour and participants will be invited to walk silently through the Memorial to conclude our weekend remembrance.

I believe all of us would agree that the Memorial has lived up to our hopes and dreams, serving its purpose “to commemorate, to educate, to heal”. Current and former members of the GRVVMC Board of Directors and the Honorary Board are invited to attend all events and interact with teachers, parents, school children and so many citizens who helped create one of the most educational and beautiful memorials in America.

We hope your schedule allows you to participate in these events. All events are free and open to the public. Your ongoing support of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of Greater Rochester has made this Memorial a community treasure.

On a personal note, after almost 20 years in the leadership role for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, I will be stepping down as President. I will be delighted to continue to volunteer as a regular board member. We are honored and appreciative of the support of community leaders over the years, especially our Co-Chairs: Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks and Mayor Bob Duffy. In addition, our champion of the Memorial since its inception, New York State Senator Jim Alesi, will be on hand for the ten year anniversary events as Honorary Chair.

We look forward to seeing you in September. God Bless you and God Bless America!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry R. Culhane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Dr. Barry R. Culhane, President
Vietnam Veterans Memorial of Greater Rochester, Inc.

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