

# **Vietnam Monument**

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**Veterans Senator Hinojosa and Representative Smith, every Vietnam Veteran who has honored us with their presence, Lt. Governor Dewhurst, Speaker Craddick, Director Flowers and representatives of the American Vietnamese community whose sons and daughters fought beside us; it is a privilege to welcome you to the LBJ Library on behalf of our family. We are just one of thousands of families who served their country in Vietnam.**

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**Vietnam Veterans are our heroes. Their sacrifice deserves to be remembered and revered by our generation and generations yet unborn.**

**I want to introduce three members of our family who are here with me to salute these great Americans. My sister Lynda is the wife of Vietnam veteran Marine Corps Major Charles Robb who served in the trenches near Danang. Lynda and Chuck's first born Lucinda like thousands of children of Vietnam veterans didn't even see her father until she was six**

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**months old. My son Lyndon Nugent is a ten-year veteran test pilot for the United States Army.**

**Like countless other Vietnam veterans' children Lyndon missed sharing with his daddy his first conversations, first run and first prayers ~ so many of the firsts that light up the life of a parent and child.**

**I am especially grateful to introduce my former husband Vietnam veteran, <sup>4</sup>Airman First Class**

**Patrick Nugent who volunteered in Vietnam as a Loadmaster, and publicly acknowledge my everlasting gratitude for his sacrifice and the great legacy he gave our children and all our family.**

**Before my Mother's death Patrick Nugent asked me if Mother would serve as Honorary Chair of the Texas Capitol Vietnam Monument Committee. I told him since her stroke Mother wasn't accepting public honors, but I would gladly ask her. I thought that this might be her only exception.<sup>5</sup> It was.**

**Mother was nearly blind - wheelchair bound and could no longer speak, but she responded with a heart-felt applause which spoke volumes. I had taken Mamma many times in her wheel chair to the Texas Capitol grounds. I'd push her around the Capitol stopping at every monument.**

**We saw monuments to the veterans of the confederacy, the Spanish American War, World War**

**I, Korea but no monument to the two wars that had shaped our family's life so profoundly World War II and Vietnam. We couldn't believe this or understand it. How could Texas let that happen? Mother was so proud, as all our family is that Patrick was working with many of you to rectify that omission for these most worthy veterans- the Veterans of Vietnam. Vietnam was a tortuous experience for Daddy a war he inherited, a war he tried with all that was in him to find an honorable way out of. My father was fiercely proud of and grateful to the men and women who served our country and to their families for**

**their sacrifice. He wanted desperately to bring them all home safely, and ultimately gave his political life trying to hasten a peaceful resolution for them and for all of us.**

**Our family had no sons. But we were fiercely proud my sister's husband and mine chose to serve in Vietnam. And Lynda and I were honored to care for our children while their Daddy's were at war. We gave all we had. But so did thousands of other families. We were one of the fortunate ones whose sons came home. Many were not so lucky.**

**In preparing for today, I re-read many of Patrick's daily letters from Vietnam. I relived the angst of a year of separation that war brought us all. I was especially proud to read his letter of June 27, 1968. He was stationed in Cam Ranh Bay and anxious to find service at the heart of the war. "Today I spent the entire day in intensive training... I've got a lot of hard work ahead of me, but I don't mind it in the least.**

**Because I now know that I'll be doing something that I have wanted to do all along-fly like a bird, but foremost be a direct support and aide to those men on**

**the ground who need the supplies so badly.” Later I received a letter saying “when I return home from active duty and revert back to my reserve status all Uncle Sam has to do is call and I’ll be there”.**

**Today we have come together to ask a grateful state to finally honor those Texas veterans of Vietnam who answered Uncle Sam’s call and traveled thousands of miles, risked life and limb for their country and sometimes made the ultimate sacrifice.**

**At the heart of the LBJ Library there are photographs of a cross section of those who served; Enlisted men and officers, men and women, black and white, Native American, Asian American, Hispanic Americans all Americans who were truly “All American” heroes. They are at the heart of our Library and forever in the grateful hearts of our family.**

**Much to my regret Mother didn't live to see this most moving and worthy memorial.**

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**I have no doubt she would have led our family in applauding its design, saluting those it honors. I believe somehow she knows that you all are making this just day come. I want to add my check and my cheers to all of your hard work to making it come soon.**

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Johnson  
LBJ Library

Luci Baines  
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