

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

THE VIETNAM CENTER

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May 14, 1998

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.
1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 3105
Arlington, VA 22209-3901

Dear Admiral:

Middy and I leave tomorrow for New Zealand, but before departing, I wanted to brief you on our first meeting with the architect responsible for designing the Vietnam Center building.

The meeting occurred on Tuesday, 12 May, and included Theresa Drewell, Texas Tech's Director of Facility Planning and Construction, Mr. Ken Condray, an architect of Condray and Associates, Mr. Michael Molina of Facility Planning and Construction, who will be the "action officer" for the Vietnam Building, Horn Professor Shankar Chatterjee (a museum scientist), our two archivists, and myself.

I gave the group as detailed an account of my vision of the building as possible. The subsequent discussions were particularly useful, as Professor Chatterjee had some very relevant observations to make from his lifetime in museum science.

We have agreed that the main exhibition hall will be either octagonal or pentagonal in shape, and will have a ceiling two stories tall. Suspended from the ceiling will be a "Huey", which people entering the museum will initially see from below, but which they also will be able to view from a second-floor balcony. One wall of the main exhibition hall will be a two-story tall map of Southeast Asia which, utilizing the latest laser and computer technology, will enable visitors to query various sites on the map and call up video of principal events of the war that occurred at those sites.

The octagonal shape will continue onto the third floor, where it will encompass faculty offices around its outside, with a "common room" in the center where faculty and graduate students will meet to discuss research. This area will house the "School of Southeast Asian Studies" which I alluded to on the evening of the banquet in April.

We will be working on details of the floor plans for all three floors, incorporating lessons we have learned from the International Cultural Center and Southwest

VIETNAM CENTER NATIONAL COUNCIL
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Collection/Special Collections Library building, and from our own personal observations over the years.

The architect has agreed to January 1999 as a reasonable deadline to produce visual concepts of the building and also a computer-generated video walk-through of the facility. My goal is to have absolutely professional brochures developed for fund-raising purposes, and to have the Chancellor unveil this project and speak about it at the opening of our 3rd Triennial Vietnam Symposium in April. I particularly want the Chancellor to do this first "pitch" for the building, as the more I can get him to do the advertising, the more deeply he will be committed to the project. I am more than willing to step back in order to ensure the success of the project. We can very easily arrange this as a major media event, which will further help the project.

The planners still have two sites in mind; however, I have settled on the parking lot immediately south of the library. It is by far the better location of the two. I have suggested to Theresa Drewell that from now on she always think of that spot as "Reckner's corner." She countered that perhaps we should call it "Reckner's retreat." My immediate response was that when it comes to the Vietnam project, Reckner never retreats. I am certain we will end up with that location.

I have now signed over \$40,000 from our state account in order to get the architect busy developing plans. When we get closer to the end of the fiscal year, I probably will be able to release another \$10,000.

With this meeting, I believe this project has taken a major step forward. Until the pictures of the building arrive, the concept is entirely theoretical. When we get the pictures and the walk-through video, then it will become a reality in many people's minds. In fact, I think the building concept will take on a life of its own. It will happen, largely because people have accepted the vision, backed up by the visual representations.

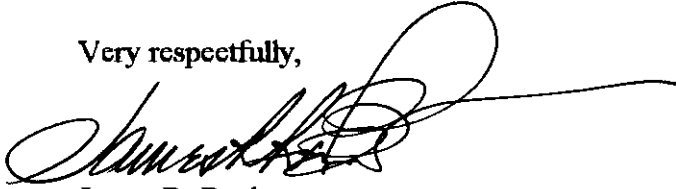
I have instructed the architect to survey the site and determine the largest floor space we can fit into the allocated piece of land, bearing in mind the need for setbacks, etc. I have directed them to develop plans for a three story building with a full basement and reinforced for future expansion upward to five stories. When we get the cost estimate for that, I will go back to Chancellor Montford with the new figure. My point is, I don't want the architect restricted by an arbitrary figure. I want him to develop the best possible design, and then we will go after the amount of money necessary for it.

And I have told the architect to design an appropriate office for Admiral Elmo R. //
Zumwalt, Jr., preferably one with a commanding view of the campus.

If you need to contact me for any reason during my stay in New Zealand, Admiral, Priscilla can e-mail me at my son's home at: I will submit a report of my trip immediately upon my return.

I am much looking forward to yours and Mouza's visit in June, along with Vice Admiral and Muggs Tidd's visit. The Admiral advised me yesterday that according to the doctors, Muggs will be "good to go" for the June conference. We all look forward to visiting with her.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James R. Reckner", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

James R. Reckner
Director

cc: Vice Admiral Emmett H. Tidd, USN (Ret)



E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.
ADMIRAL, U.S. NAVY (RET.)

May 21, 1998

James R. Reckner, Ph.D.
Director, Center for the Study of the
Vietnam Conflict
Texas Tech University
P. O. Box 41045
Lubbock, TX 79409-1045

Dear Jim:

Many thanks for your letter of May 14 outlining your plan for the Vietnam building.

I will look forward with pleasure to using my office during my visits to your April and June seminars when the building is finished.

I find the plans most exciting and hope you will use my name in fundraising activities.

I hope you and Middy had a great visit to New Zealand. All best wishes.

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Admiral, USN (Ret.)

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