

THE PROJECT ON THE VIETNAM GENERATION

A nonprofit effort to foster scholarship on the dynamics of the generation.

President
John Wheeler
Executive Director
Sandie Fauriol

(202) 357-4258

April 15, 1985

Dr. Walter Capps
1724 Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

*Some hope to be able
to meet you on the 29th!*

Dear Dr. Capps:

You are cordially invited to attend a meeting sponsored by The Project on the Vietnam Generation on Monday, April 29, 1985 at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The meeting/planning session will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Carmichael Auditorium of the National Museum of American History (between 12th & 14th Streets on Constitution Avenue, N.W.; Metro: Blue Line, either Federal Triangle or Smithsonian (Mall exit) stop). Lunch will be provided at 12:30 p.m. in the Reception Suite across from the Auditorium.

The Project on the Vietnam Generation was established in early 1985 to "foster scholarship on the dynamics of the generation." As a first step, we are inviting scholars, writers, researchers, journalists, and members of the historical, political science, psychological and sociological associations as well as individuals from the religious, business and educational communities to participate in a first, informal planning meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to collect ideas on how to structure a multi-year program that will stimulate nationwide the development and publication of scholarship on how the events of the 1960's and early 70's are affecting society and especially the 60 million men and women who came of age during those tumultuous years and now comprise the Vietnam Generation.

Enclosed you will find an agenda for the meeting, our statement of purpose, summary of key points the Project will address, and some biographical data about the organizers of The Project on the Vietnam Generation.

Please join us for an exciting and thought-provoking session on April 29. You will be a tremendous asset to our meeting and I can assure you a stimulating afternoon with equally dynamic and interesting people.

I appreciate your interest in The Project on the Vietnam Generation and look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Sandie F.

Sandie Fauriol
Executive Director

Note: Since I need an exact count for the Security and Catering Offices of the Smithsonian, please confirm your attendance by calling me at work (by 4/25) at (202) 357-4258 or by leaving a message on my home answering machine at (703) 573-1217. Thank you!

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THE PROJECT ON THE VIETNAM GENERATION

SUMMARY REPORT
OF THE APRIL 29, 1985 PLANNING MEETING

National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.

May 24, 1985

THE PROJECT ON THE VIETNAM GENERATION
Summary Report of the April 29, 1985 Planning Meeting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
THE NEED TO FOSTER SCHOLARSHIP ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE GENERATION	2-4
Focus	2
Assumptions	2-3
Why Is This Important?	3
What Is Fostering Scholarship?	3-4
WHAT THE PROJECT ON THE VIETNAM GENERATION CAN DO TO FOSTER SCHOLARSHIP ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE GENERATION	4-6
The Generation and Vietnam Era Events	4
How the Project on the Vietnam Generation Can Help You	5
Actions for Year 1	5-6
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS	6

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May 24, 1985

THE PROJECT ON THE VIETNAM GENERATION
Summary Report of the April 29, 1985 Planning Meeting

Introduction

The Project on the Vietnam Generation was established in early 1985 "to foster scholarship on the dynamics of the generation". As a first step, the Project held a planning meeting at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History on Monday, April 29, 1985. More than 30 scholars, writers, journalists, psychologists, psychiatrists, political scientists, sociologists and historians attended the meeting from as far away as California, Florida, Pennsylvania and New York.

The participants' response to The Project on the Vietnam Generation was highly enthusiastic, and the mandate clear: through scholarship we must build a dialogue within our generation that examines the profound, continuing effects of the interconnected events of the Vietnam era upon those who came of age during the 1960's and early 70's. The scholarship will have value in and of itself, as new knowledge. But the dialogue it advances will also help foster healing in the Vietnam Generation over the divisions caused by the war, and it will help us focus on a renewal of creativity and our public contribution in the years ahead.

The meeting began with the participants introducing themselves. The collection of talent at the meeting was extraordinary and the introductions served as a way to begin building the network of people interested in the Project, something all the participants wanted and felt warranted continued attention.

After the introductions, John Wheeler, President of The Project on the Vietnam Generation, made a presentation on THE NEED TO FOSTER SCHOLARSHIP ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE GENERATION that was followed by a discussion of how to foster scholarship. The meeting concluded after a list of activities was prepared for The Project on the Vietnam Generation to accomplish during its first planning year (March, 1985 to February, 1986).

The following is a summary of the key points made during the presentation and discussion of the April 29 meeting.

* * *

The Need To Foster Scholarship on the
Dynamics of the Generation

Focus

The focus of The Project on the Vietnam Generation is on PEOPLE -- a generation of people, what they do, and how events in the world affect them. The focus is on human beings as they live their lives.

The Vietnam Generation is roughly 60 million people, 30 million men and 30 million women. This group of people went through several crucibles -- for example, civil rights was the beginning and is a defining factor for the generation. Also, the energy of the civil rights movement was an important stimulus for the antiwar protestors, and the energy of the war protest accelerated the women's movement, environmental movement, and the civil rights movement.

The second key focus is on INTERCONNECTIONS. We need to trace the interconnections among events like these, to begin to see how they shape the values and ideas of the generation. We must look at how these people respond to issues in the present because of how they were shaped by their past.

It is important to define the group of people in some way. These people, the Vietnam Generation, came of age when the war was going on and were subject to the draft. They are basically the same group who fall into the Baby Boom category - all were shaped by the "fire", which was fueled by many logs: the civil rights movement, women's movement, Peace Corps, assassinations of national leaders, the environmental movement, Watergate, war protest and the war itself.

Assumptions

The creation of The Project on the Vietnam Generation is based on several assumptions. The following three points are a summary of these ideas.

1) Generations are a worthwhile topic to study. This is a new field but it needs study. If ever there was a generation warranting such a scholarly effort, it probably would be the Vietnam Generation, growing up between two major crises: born after World War II and coming of age during the Vietnam era.

2) Major traumas shape generations. For example, a book by George Fredrickson called The Inner Civil War is an intellectual history about the generation that came of age

during the Civil War. His thesis is that those people who were young and fought in the Civil War were significantly shaped by those events. So important was that shaping that it was worth careful research and exposition.

3) This group of people called the Vietnam Generation have many things in common, enough things that bind them together in history. When great traumas take place, they can create deep divisions among us. We therefore have a need for healing, one of the long term goals of The Project on the Vietnam Generation.

Why Is This Important?

Our focus is aimed at scholarship. The scholarship has value in itself, as new knowledge. But we can also look at its more immediate utility.

It is useful if what we learn helps us understand what we as an age group can do better. We can learn how to answer these questions:

- what stewardship as a generation are we giving to America now?
- what use are we making of the gifts our culture and experiences have given us?
- what "stewardship" report might our generation give our country in the year 2025, as we look back on our lives together?

Further, we should consider that in the next 10 presidential campaigns, the Vietnam Generation will be a major voting segment. This does not mean we will all vote the same way, but by the end of that time, many of us will be among those who have a great deal of influence in our culture.

Along with stewardship, there is the notion of accountability, the idea of holding ourselves accountable for the gifts we have been given.

The words STEWARDSHIP and ACCOUNTABILITY may be the two that give this Project its utility and make it worth studying, in addition to the value of the research and knowledge.

What Is Fostering Scholarship?

Finally, it is helpful to give examples of how we can foster scholarship on the dynamics of the Vietnam Generation.

The following are examples of actions we can take:

- * increase public awareness about the generation -- its actions and contributions;
- * conduct original research, including empirical data;
- * initiate good literature searches and build a bibliography of written materials on the Vietnam era events;
- * sponsor field surveys;
- * encourage the teaching of new courses on the generation. These could be semester courses or in two- to three-day teaching units;
- * encourage exhibits in museums about the Vietnam era;
- * look at the attitudes of members of the generation toward their vocations -- why are there many entrepreneurs and service-oriented people in our generation?
- * explore a good definition of generations: what should the definition be -- shared values, shared experiences, a time period?, external events and their influence? Our definition will have to be in the form of a matrix;
- * and finally, fostering scholarship is stimulating funding sources to give grants to people who wish to study this area.

What The Project on the Vietnam Generation
Can We Do to Foster Scholarship on the
Dynamics of the Generation

The Generation and Vietnam Era Events

The Project on the Vietnam Generation will look at how the actions and attitudes of the 60 million Americans who came of age during the 1960's and early 70's were affected by the interconnected events of the Vietnam era. In summary, the age range of the Vietnam Generation in 1985 is 31 to 45 years. The Vietnam era events include (in chronological order) THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, THE VIETNAM WAR AND PROTEST, PEACE CORPS, WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, SPACE PROGRAM, ROCK 'N ROLL, ASSASSINATIONS OF NATIONAL LEADERS (Medgar Evers, John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy), 1968 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION RIOTS, WOODSTOCK, ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT (EARTH DAY), KENT STATE, THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION, THE DRUG CULTURE, WATERGATE AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT.

How The Project on the Vietnam Generation Can Help You

The Project on the Vietnam Generation can be an important resource for people interested in studying the generation and the interconnected events of the 1960's and early 70's. The Project's office will act as a clearinghouse of information on and about the Vietnam era, about the actions and contributions of the generation, and about the people in and out of the generation who are contributing to this field of study. Another important function of The Project is to be a central focal point for the network of scholars, writers, journalists, and professionals in the fields of religion, education, health and business who wish to know about each other. The Project has already compiled a list of more than 100 people who have expressed an interest in the work of the Project and who can contribute toward the Project's success.

The Project will also help foster interest in funding for projects that scholars wish to undertake.

Finally, The Project on the Vietnam Generation will act as a communication link to keep those interested in studying about the dynamics of the generation informed about what conferences are taking place, what literature has recently been published, and about the progress of the Project's own work.

Actions for Year 1

While Year 1 of The Project on the Vietnam Generation has been designated primarily as a year of planning, there are a number of activities that will enable the Project to begin fostering scholarship on the dynamics of the generation.

The following represents the priority activities that the The Project on the Vietnam Generation will accomplish or begin during its first year in operation:

- 1) Continue to fund raise;
- 2) Build a network of people interested in the Project;
- 3) Compile a list of courses on Vietnam era events;
- 4) Begin compiling a bibliography of written materials;
- 5) Nurture relationships with existing funding sources including the Smithsonian;
- 6) Form a Board of Directors;

- 7) Prepare an Operational Plan for Year 2 and beyond and confirm organizational structure;
- 8) Publish a newsletter/quarterly report; and
- 9) Begin planning a conference for Year 2.

* * *

Concluding Thoughts

The Project on the Vietnam Generation has much work ahead to do. We appreciate the contributions of those who attended the April 29 meeting and others who could not attend but expressed an interest in our project that have confirmed the importance of our efforts.

We welcome your comments, suggestions and help. We are particularly interested in learning about the work you do, relevant literature you have published or are working on, courses you may be teaching and how you wish to become involved in our Project.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please write or call Sandie Fauriol, Executive Director, The Project on the Vietnam Generation, Room A 1040, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, (202) 357-4258.

Thank you.

THE PROJECT ON THE VIETNAM GENERATION
PARTICIPANT LIST
April 29, 1985 Planning Meeting

Mrs. Kay Barlow, studying for her MSW from the University of Maryland, works with Vietnam veterans on post traumatic stress syndrome.

Colonel Keith Barlow, Chairman of the Department of National Security at the U.S. Army War College.

Ms. Virginia Bensheimer, National Editor, The Tampa Tribune.

Dr. Walter Capps, Professor of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, recently taught a course on the Impact of the Vietnam War that had the highest enrollment of any course in the university's history.

Mr. Roy Cook, coordinator for the National Prayer Breakfast.

Ms. Jeanne Edmunds, President of The Idea Factory, and formerly the Producer of the CBS Morning News in Washington.

Dr. Arthur Egendorf, clinical psychologist and author, Healing from the War: Trauma and Transformation After Vietnam.

Dr. Edward C. Ezell, military historian with the Division of Armed Forces History, National Museum of American History.

Ms. Sandie Fauriol, Executive Director of The Project on the Vietnam Generation.

Ms. Marilyn Cole Finley, Editor of Perspectives, the news journal of the American Historical Association.

Mr. David Harrington, social worker and teacher at Catholic University, also works with troubled Vietnam veterans as Director of the nonprofit Back in the World.

Dr. Bettina Huber, sociologist and Deputy Director of The American Sociological Association.

Dr. Arnold Kahn, Administrative Officer for Social and Ethical Responsibility at the American Psychological Association.

Ms. Mary King, Executive Director of Young Ideas and former Deputy Director of ACTION under President Carter; now writing a book about her experiences during the civil rights and women's movements.

The Reverend Stephan Klingelhofer, Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Peter Kovler, private investor and Foundation director working at the Center for National Policy.

Ms. Marcia Landau, public relations consultant and former media relations specialist with the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program.

Mr. Gene Martin, Foreign Service Officer and Special Assistant to the Hon. Paul Wolfowitz.

Ms. Donna Matias, intern with the Caribbean Basin Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies (Georgetown University) and a member of the "next" generation.

Ms. Edith Mayo, Curator, Division of Political History at the National Museum of American History.

Dr. Bernice J. Reagon, civil rights activist and Culture Historian at the National Museum of American History.

Ms. Heidi Rosvold, Editorial Assistant with Perspectives at the American Historical Association and a member of the "next generation".

Ms. Catherine Rudder, Associate Director of the American Political Science Association.

Mrs. Fath Davis Ruffins, producer of the Smithsonian exhibit: After the American Revolution: Everyday Life in America, 1780-1800; now writing a book on gender roles in America, 1930-1985.

Mr. John Simmons, teaching assistant with Dr. Walter Capps, working on his Ph.D. in religious studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Walter Slote, psychoanalyst who was in Vietnam during the war years studying the culture and family structure of the Vietnamese.

Mr. Rob Snyder, Smithsonian Fellow and historian, writing a dissertation on vaudeville in America.

Stephen Sonnenberg, M.D., psychiatrist and author of The Trauma of War: Stress and Recovery of Vietnam Veterans; currently writing a book on the psychology of nuclear deterrence.

Mr. Joel Swerdlow, writer and co-author of To Heal A Nation, the story about the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial; currently doing research for a book on the years 1967-68 in America.

Jeremy Waletzky, M.D., psychiatrist interested in studying the aspect of societal and personal denial of the Vietnam war and the events of the era.

Mr. John Wheeler, President, The Project on the Vietnam Generation.

The Honorable Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia/Pacific Affairs (represented by John Monjo, Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State).

Mr. Philip H. Yasinski, Director of Special Programs at the School of Advanced International Studies (Johns Hopkins) where he is directing a program on the Successor Generation.