



VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND

JAN C. SCRUGGS

Founder and President, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

In 1979, Jan Scruggs conceived the idea of building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., as a tribute to all who served during one of the longest wars in American history. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is among the most visited memorials in the nation's capital.

Scruggs was a wounded and decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, having served in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade of the U.S. Army. He felt a memorial would serve as a healing device for a different kind of wound—that inflicted on our national psyche by the long and controversial Asian war.

Scruggs launched the effort with \$2,800 of his own money and gradually gained the support of other Vietnam veterans in persuading Congress to provide a prominent location on federal government property somewhere in Washington, D.C. After a difficult struggle, Congress responded, and the site chosen was on the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial.

As president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Inc., the nonprofit organization created to build and maintain the Memorial, Scruggs headed up the effort that raised \$8.4 million and saw the Memorial completed in just two years. It was dedicated on November 13, 1982, during a week-long national salute to Vietnam veterans in the nation's capital.

After the completion of the Memorial, Scruggs, along with author Joel L. Swerdlow, put to paper *To Heal a Nation*—the moving story of Scruggs' efforts to build The Wall. In May 1988, it became an "NBC Movie of the Week."

Scruggs continues to lead VVMF as it enters a new phase in its mission to remember those who sacrificed in Vietnam: building the Education Center at The Wall. The Education Center will show the photos and tell the stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War, as well as celebrate the values embodied by American service members in all of our nation's wars.

He has appeared on 60 Minutes, Nightline, Good Morning America and The Today Show as well as C-SPAN, CNN and FOX. He has written opinion articles for *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Times* and other national and regional publications. A national speaker and author, Scruggs has written articles on a wide range of topics, including the Civil War and the battle of Gettysburg.

Scruggs is a native of Washington, D.C., and grew up in Bowie, Md. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from American University in Washington, D.C., and his law degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.