

PEROT INVOLVEMENT 1/80 - 12/15/81

The chronology of events listed below is a history of the involvement of Mr. H. Ross Perot with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

- o Mr. Perot was contacted by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for the first time in January, 1980, when he was asked to become a member of our National Sponsoring Committee. In a phone conversation with Bob Doubek, our Executive Director, during the last week in January, who had called to follow up on our request. Perot declined to be a member of the sponsoring committee or to contribute until he was able to find out what the design would be.
- o In early February, I contacted Perot by phone to ask for a personal contribution. He agreed to send \$10,000. We received his check ten days later. It was our second substantial gift. We received \$10,000 from Gruman^{WA} Aero Space on January 16, 1980.
- o Throughout the first half of 1980, while our legislation was going through Congress, I called him from time to time regarding the legislative process.
- o In late June 1980, the White House sent Perot a letter inviting him to attend the signing ceremony on July 1st. Upon receiving his invitation, he sent two people from the EDS public relations staff on June 30, 1980, to meet with me, Bob, and Ernie Wittenber, our PR consultant. One of the staff members was Mr. Bill Wright. They attempted to negotiate some involvement for Perot in the event. One idea was for us to get President Carter to mention him in his speech.
- o Wright stated that Perot never talked with reporters, but this would be a special case. We were told that on July 1, 1980, Mr. Perot would have an open telephone for reporters to call him personally and that he would endorse VVMF and encourage people around the country to send in contributions.
- o On July 1, 1980, President Carter did sign the bill into law but we were unable to arrange with the President to mention Mr. Perot in any manner. Perot, however, did get some coverage in the Dallas papers for his support of the memorial.
- o On July 2, 1980, I called Perot. He stated that he really was too busy to get involved right now with the memorial but that what I should do is call Robert McNamara and Melvin Laird since they were the ones who sent us to Vietnam and that they would be great candidates for raising the money needed to build the Vietnam memorial. He further stated he really had no further interest in helping us at that time.

- o I called Perot occasionally during the last half of 1980 and *early* 1981 to give him updates on how the memorial fund was doing and on how our design competition was coming along.
- o March 12, 1981 - I spoke with Perot for approximately half an hour and gave him various arguments about how well our design competition was being run, about how many artists had presented their renderings already, about how it was going to be a wonderful competition and that we really wanted him to fund it. He agreed to fund the architectural design competition beginning on March 13 and ending upon its completion. He agreed and he essentially wanted a budget for the entire competition.
- o On March 20, 1981, I called him again and he said to send the bill to him as they come in and he will reimburse us for paying them.
- o On April 21, 1981, I called him in regard to a fund raising luncheon to be hosted by the SUN Company of Dallas and asked his advice on who we should get to attend the luncheon. He said to get the chief executive officers of the major corporations. Perot said that he would visit them individually and ask for each of them to give \$50,000 or more. He then agreed to send us all of the money for the design competition (\$160,000). One other statement he made was that he did not want to see a "flower power" memorial.
- o On April 24, 1981, I called Perot again and told him that our check had not arrived and he apologized and said that he was looking into it.
- o On April 27, 1981, I called Perot again because we still had not recieved the money and found out that they had screwed up within EDS; that he was putting it in the mail tomorrow morning to us. He also agreed to see about speaking at the Memorial Day service we were having.
- o On May 4, 1981, I called Perot to tell him about the design, which we were announcing publicly on May 6th. His reaction was negative.
- o On the 13th of May, Perot called me and said that we had a nice design for the men who were killed but not for the men who came home living. He said, "I enjoyed helping you but I am folding my tent now. I'm not coming to D.C. on Memorial Day to speak because if somebody in the press asks me I will tell them I don't like it. I never lie, but I'll never tell anyone that I don't like the design."

- o On July 17, 1981, I called Perot again to ask him to request Mr. Paul Thayer to be the chairman of our Corporate drive. Mr. Perot felt that the design ignored the living and was underground. He refused to call Mr. Thayer as Thayer would want him to help raise money and he refuses to raise money for a memorial he dislikes.
- o On October 21, 1981, Mr. Perot saw the design at an exhibit in the Sheraton Hotel and spoke briefly with our *INTERN*
- o On November 5, 1981, Mr. Perot called me up and said that he had received many letters from veterans. He said that he disliked the design more every day and was really angry that he helped VVMF out. He also requested the phone number of Tom Carhart, the individual who organized the opposition to the design.
- o On December 11, 1981, Perot called me up and said we should stop plans for the memorial. He feels that most Vietnam veterans are against it and in 30 days we will have a big controversy on our hands. His position was to change the design. He also offered to fund a new competition and stated that he would be able to get the design approved by the Fine Arts Commission, etc. with no problem. Later on that day, I called his secretary and told her that I decided to accept his advice and to try to reach a compromise on the design.
- o On December 15, 1981, I received a call from the Associated Press, a Mr. Mike Finesilver. He had just talked to Perot. Perot said that he wanted to do a Gallup Poll on the design for the memorial and that Mr. Perot had called the design a trench and a hole in the ground. That story went over AP that day.

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