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331-5000

January 26, 1984

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Mr. James Webb  
2309 North Glebe Road  
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Dear Mr. Webb:

I am one of the "attack dogs." That is the intemperate phrase you used to describe the lawyers for VVMF in your letter of January 17, 1984 to its President, Jan Scruggs. The letter accompanies your "statement" about the VVMF controversy. Ironically, you "urge" Mr. Scruggs "to stay closer to the facts than you [Mr. Scruggs] have in the past few years." Neither your letter nor your statement, however, abide by your own advice.

I comment here only upon one of the instances in which you stray from your own counsel. I choose it because it happens to be the one set of facts I know more about than anyone else -- the role of my law firm in defense of VVMF's effort to honor Vietnam servicemen with an enduring memorial.

Your statement asks, "Why should these directors be allowed to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of the public's donations for high-powered lawyers whose mission is to keep the public from seeing disbursement ledgers that would indicate how and where their money was spent?" I hope you "stay close to the facts" elsewhere in your statement, although this excess, like the "attack dog" metaphor, affords little hope of that.

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My law firm has represented the VVMF for more than 18 months. Attacks like those found in your statement, threats of suit by lawyers for opponents of VVMF, and deliberately false presentations like the TV series by the since-departed Carlton Sherwood, have kept us busy for what could well mount to hundreds of thousands of dollars if these attacks persist and the costs of defense were charged in full. But at the outset my firm decided to represent VVMF at greatly reduced rates. Its total bill does not remotely approximate "hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Your "attack dog" metaphor also misrepresents our mission. We have not sought to "keep Perot and others out of the books," of VVMF. Indeed, we have repeatedly extended to Mr. Perot and others VVMF's offer to have the Independent Audit Committee investigate and report on any specific charge of financial misconduct. Instead of confronting VVMF with facts, those who have persistently assaulted the VVMF have dealt in the kind of innuendo and falsehood that is typified by your misrepresentations about my firm.

As you know, the GAO is presently conducting a full audit of VVMF's books even though such audits were regularly conducted by a major, independent accounting firm. This is the audit Mr. Sherwood's TV station offered to do until it withdrew from that position. VVMF may well be the most frequently and thoroughly audited entity of its kind. All books and records are open to GAO.

VVMF has always honored the public's need to know how its money was spent. That does not mean, however, that VVMF will cooperate with individuals like Mr. Sherwood who are more concerned with grinding an ax than serving the public. Unfortunately, much of our time has been taken up defending against those who recklessly "stray from the facts" while urging others to stay close to them.

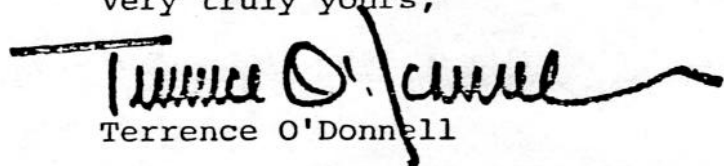
I, for one, am determined to see these ugly attacks on VVMF stopped. If you are prepared to join in that effort, I would gladly join too. Having been apprised of your misstatements about this firm, I would recommend that

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you start with a thorough review of other "facts" alleged in your statement. But maybe even that is less important than developing a new resolve.

Please call if you think we can be of help.

Very truly yours,

  
Terrence O'Donnell

TOD/as