

questioned. They were portrayed as misfit suckers, and worse. Yet their homecoming was not complete. It will not be until their service is recognized.

Rick Hart's statue recognizes and honors their service. It can help to make that homecoming finally take place.

I urge you to approve it.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

Next is Tom Carhart.

MR. CARHART: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Carhart. I represent only myself. I think it is fair to say that I started this controversy a year ago.

I would first like to agree with Don Bailey, in emphasizing, in spite of CBS' derogatory comment to the contrary, no one has ever uttered racism to the contrary; that is a low and vicious slur. I don't care if the Pope submitted this design, or Atilla the Hun, you criticize the art and not the artist.

A lot of people misunderstood what this memorial is about, and you will have to bear with me. This is something that rips at my guts. It is very emotional.

Let me read briefly of something written by Paul Goldenberg of the New York Times, Thursday, October 7. "By

questioning the Hart sculpture and the flag pole, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund seems intent on something that speaks of heroism and absolute moral certainty. But there can be no such liberalism where Vietnam is concerned. To try to reflect the pain and anguish is to misunderstand all that has happened, and to suggest that, no less has been learned from the lessons of Vietnam. The Vietnam Memorial could be one of the most important works in Washington -- the insertion of the flag pole not only destroys the abstract principal, inside and outside space that Maya Lin has created, it tries to shift this memorial away from its focus and towards a literal interpretation of heroism and patriotism that ultimately treats the war dead in simplistic terms."

Well, Mr. Goldenberg ^{a memorial} hit the nail on the head.

This is not immoral to the dead. We respect the dead. There were 2.6 million of us who served. Congress authorized, and the President signed into law, permission for the Vietnam Veterans Fund to build a memorial, "in honor and recognition of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War."

That is it. No separate designation of the dead from those who returned. The listing of the names of the dead was an aspect of the design, competition brought in for

unknown reasons. You have heard people comment here today about it is hard to die, about when we were young, you must learn to mourn, it is hard to grieve.

Sure, it is hard to grieve or mourn, but this is not a memorial to mourn or grieve. This is a memorial to honor those who served.

You are going to hear from architects and artists later who will say that this is a violation of the competition, this is a confusion of artistic schools. I don't care. I don't think that many of us care. We care, Maya Lin has said in the first place that this was for the dead.

Well, you can come here and feel whatever you want. It is an open black wall, you provide your emotions. That is not good enough. This memorial must, "honor and recognize those who served."

And ambiguous feelings are not good enough from someone from Iowa, or Texas, who comes for their one trip in the life of the Nation, and says look down there at that black wall, that is the Vietnam Memorial that honors the 2.7 million who served.

I am not an artist. I may be wrong. I may be an extremist, but I am not alone. There aren't many who are as moved as I am. We feel wronged by this. This compromise is

literally a compromise, this is not something that was gagged down our throats by anyone else. This is something where Vietnam Veterans went into a room and hammered it out, and we came out with this, and yes, I was an extremist, and no, I still don't like that wall, but the compromise means a whole minute piece, we will accept a statue and the flag, the statue was a blunt appraisal of the way we were. I am moved by it. I am pleased that this emotional feeling could be caught up by a man who was never there, and yet it has been. That is a work of artistic genius.

I would humbly request that you consider the purpose of this memorial, and the background of this compromise, and allow us to have a memorial that would be truly honest.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Michael S. Davidson.

MR. DAVIDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for asking me to speak at this hearing.

I am a member of the Vietnam Veterans Advisory Council. I am also a Veteran. I have 36 years service in the United States Army, including service in Vietnam.

I find that the statements of those who preceded me to this podium in support of the addition of the statue,