

**Topic: EP Veterans Memorial Dedication**

**“Thank You speech to all that made the Memorial Possible”**

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**Date: November 9, 2008**

This day has been a long time coming and it's time to give credit to those that have made it possible with their TIME, MONEY and IN-KIND DONATIONS

I'd like to thank our guest speaker, General Schulstad, Mayor Young, Chanhassen Color Guard, the Good Samaritan Singers, Boy Scout Troop 370, T6 Thunder World WarII aircraft, our guest presenters and of course our honorees for their contributions and services.

The Eden Prairie Veterans Memorial has been a three year project with hundreds of contributions from many forms of resources. The objective was to raise enough money to build a respectable Memorial and the range of contributors was from the dollar bills dropped in our “money jugs” at various community functions such as: 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations, Fire station open houses, Lions Corn Feeds, Flying Cloud Air ExpoConcerts in the Park and 5K races upwards to the “in-kind” donations like this stage and chairs that were donated by Bill Michaelson of Total Rental in Shakapee and up from there to the \$100,000 leadership commitment from Ed Flaherty of Lariat Companies. Eden Prairie is a generous community and we are lucky to have this project here. If it were not for these supporters, we would not be here today and we thank them for that.

We need to thank the nearly 300 donors that sponsored a name on the wall of veterans. We appreciate the \$250 contributions which really helped to reach our goal. And that process does not stop today. In fact.... We are a little short on the funding and there is time for you to help further. We will be adding another batch of names in the coming months and if you would like to have a name added, complete the form found on the back of your program and mail it to us as soon as possible. Or..... if you would like to make a general donation we could really use your help in the form of \$5-10-20 or more if you can. It is appreciated and will help to close the gap.

Also available is a keepsake program that gives you all the detail about the Memorial and we are asking a \$5 donation to cover the cost. The booklet was mostly created by college students Christie Brindal and Joe Schoeder and we thank them for that. As you look at our group you can see that we're not exactly a tech savvy bunch so college kids that understand “Publisher” are greatly appreciated.

And now for our larger donors that have their names engraved on the wall at the far end of the Memorial.

At the \$2500 level we thank:

Jack & Marcia Hill

Sever Peterson Farms

Bob & Peg Grant

VFW Post 425 of Hopkins

Eden Prairie Lions Club

Eden Prairie AM Rotary Club

Military Order of the Purple Heart #268

Vince Cockriel

Duane & Carole Cox

Supervalue Foundatin

EA Sween Company (also known to us as Deli Express)

Summit Place Senior Campus

ADC Telecommunications

Fafinski, Mark & Johnson Public Accountants.

Ahlstrom Enterprises---that's the Mobil Gas station on the North side of Menards

Frank Cardarelle (Card a rel ie) Land Surveyor. They staked out the site.

Biaggi's Restaurant (Gary Chanen not only do you run a very fine restaurant but you are always the community supporter and we appreciate it)

At the \$5000 level:

Emerson Rosemount, INC  
 Bollig & Sons Inc. (Todds company Provided all the excavation)  
 Eden Prairie Foundation (in addition to the donation, they have also been our financial gatekeeper)  
 Halla Nursery (who will donate nursery items next year)  
 Beacon Bank of Eden Prairie  
 Outback Steakhouse of Eden Prairie

At the \$10,000 Level:

T6 Thunder (Bruce Olson & his World War II aircraft that just flew over. They always add a special emotion to our event)  
 Epic Events (providing the wonderful sound system)  
 REBS Marketing (they've mailed thousands of direct mail flyers for us that have returned thousands of dollars).  
 Wells Fargo Banks for their \$12,000 donation.

And now for the big guns:

At the \$50,000 level:

WalMart (our first major contributor and they stepped forward with a pledge when this was still just a dream)  
 Cold Spring Granite (for their heavy discounts on all the Black granite that you see.)  
 The State of Minnesota (for their \$100,000 as part of the bonding bill)  
 Brodin Studios for their deep discounts of the bronze sculptures.  
 City of Eden Prairie (for the land and hundreds of man hours from staff and other resources)  
 Ed Flaherty & Lariat Companies for the \$100,000 commitment made last year that brought this all to a reality. We thank you Ed.

In addition, we have to thank architect Ken Grieshaber and SRF Consulting who did all the creative design work, Bruce Karvonen and his Crew from Blackstone Construction for his fine work in building the Memorial and their patience during changes and adjustments.

And of course

City employed landscape artist, Bill Sawyer and his team. Bill has a master plan in mind for next spring that will finish the Memorial with trees and colorful plants that will match the rest of the park. Bill keeps this park a beautiful showcase for Eden Prairie and we thank you.

And we have to thank my fellow committee members who have worked so hard on this project for the past three years. I wish I could introduce each and every one of them because they each bring something special to the group. But..... in the interest of time, I simply have to summarize and say that we are unique in several ways.

First of all, we have an age spread from 20-Somethings to 80+. The 20 somethings bring a special enthusiasm and energy level and at the other end of the spectrum is our World War II vet, Bud Schwartz, who always adds a feisty spirit that keeps us in line. We cover all conflicts back to World War II and we have representation from each branch including a daughter whose father served in the Merchant Marines. Our Members were drafted, enlisted or were officers and their jobs were everything from administration to the front lines and on land, water or in the air. We have a father and daughter, a Mom of a soldier who has at least a couple of tours to Iraq, a wife of a veteran pilot, Purple Heart recipients who have chilling stories and a dad of an Iraq casualty whose name is listed on our wall of 17.

But our most important committee member is our Chair, John Mallo. John had a vision of this project three years ago and has since lead the group with unrelenting tenacity through all the challenges. John's passion for the project has prevailed through adversity and has brought us here today and for that we are grateful and we thank you John.

With that I would like to turn it over to Father Tim for the Benediction.

Thank you all for being here and any further financial help that you can give us is greatly appreciated.