



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 the longest war in American history. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the most visited memorial in Washington.

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 set up 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 Nov. 13, 1982, during a week-long national salute to Vietnam veterans in the nation's capital.

Scruggs' story of building the Memorial, *To Heal A Nation*, co-written with Joel L. Swerdlow, was made into an NBC-TV Movie of the Week in 1988. Actor Eric Roberts played the role of Scruggs.

Scruggs is a member of the Selective Service Appeals Board, a board member of the National Veterans Legal Services Project and special assistant to the chairman of the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. In 1993, he was named one of the *Ten Outstanding Young Americans* by the U.S. Jaycees.

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.