



Duckworth graduates from Air Force Academy

Second Lieutenant Madelyn Duckworth recently graduated from the United States Air Force Academy, located immediately north of Colorado Springs. She was the first Choctaw High School AFJROTC cadet to attend a service academy. She will now attend two years at Johns Hopkins to become a nurse.

Ryan Severt

Ryan Severt served in the United States Navy for three years, from 1993 to 1996. He was honorably discharged as a Navy Operation Specialist Third Class Petty Officer.

He started his basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center but was later transferred to Fleet Combat Center in Virginia to train as an Operations Specialist. He was assigned to the USS Bunker Hill Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser in Yokusaka Japan where he spent the remainder of his service. Severt worked in the Combat Information Center of the ship; day and night they would track potential enemy targets and record their movement.

During the Gulf War, just days before the Bunker Hill was to enter the Arabian Gulf, Iran issued a "Notice to Mariners", closing a part of the Gulf to Oman. No shipping traffic was allowed due to pending missile exercises. Bunker Hill was the only unit capable and available to gather information on this important mission. They were able to respond quickly and efficiently to capture the Iranian missile activity.

Severt joined the Navy just after graduating from high school at Carl Albert. He grew up as some people say, a "military brat", due to his dad being stationed at Rhein-Main AB in Germany when Server was born in 1973. He spent the first years of his life swooning his mother's German co-workers. After a couple of different places he called home, his father was then stationed at Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City, Oklahoma. After returning from his time in the Navy, he decided to return to Oklahoma, his forever home.

Severt married the love of his life, Julie Severt, in Midwest City. They have three daughters together who are following in their father's footsteps; becoming active members in the marching band, and orchestra, and will be attending Carl Albert High School just as their father did. "Serving my country has been one of the most rewarding and fulfilling times of my life and we here in the United States are so blessed to live here-may it always be so," said Severt.



Vinh Khac Nguyen

Vinh Khac Nguyen was born in Vietnam. During his youth, there was a draft to serve the country in the Vietnam War. A young Nguyen enrolled in a Vietnamese Military Academy where he graduated as a First Lieutenant. He promoted very quickly, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel after only 15 years.

During the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, Nguyen, along with many other comrades, escaped the Communist Regime by way of small boats. He recalls the 25 people on his boat kept sailing without knowing direction nor destination. Fortunately, after 23 hours on the ocean, Nguyen and the two dozen others were rescued by the 7th US Navy fleet. He was taken to a refugee camp in California where he chose Oklahoma City for resettlement.

Nguyen's first job was a clerk at the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services, then he was hired as a counselor for Oklahoma City's Comprehensive Education Training Act (CETA) program to assist refugees in English language training and job placement.

While working full time, Nguyen pursued his college education at Central State University, now UCO. From there he obtained a Bachelors Degree of Computer Science. After graduation, he was hired by the Oklahoma Tax Commission as a Computer Programmer. Two years later, he jumped at the chance to work at the Internal Revenue Service as a Computer Programmer Analyst. During his tenure at the IRS, Nguyen worked on his graduate education to obtain a Masters Degree of Business Administration (MBA) at UCO. After 25 years of service, Nguyen retired from the IRS.

During a Vietnamese New Year event in 2002, Nguyen was elected Vietnamese American Community's (VAC) Chairman. As a leader, Nguyen devoted his time to build a strong community, uniting and maintaining Vietnamese heritage and culture by organizing traditional events. Nguyen presided over all meetings, appointed committees and sub-committee chairs, raised funds, monitored the budget, worked closely with local government agencies, assisted members with trained skills to find jobs, and solved problems that community might encounter. Notably, under Nguyen's leadership, VAC raised \$5,000 to help Florida hurricane victims in 2004, \$1,615 to assist Haiti hurricane victims, \$20,494 to donate to Katrina victims in New Orleans in 2005, and donated \$20,000 to Moore Public Schools for the damage after the tornado.

After 7 years assuming duties of Chairman, due to a bylaw restraint, he vacated his position. After a 3 year hiatus, Nguyen ran for the position of Chairman for the 2013-2016 term. Being Chairman of the Vietnamese American Community, he promoted the unification of Vietnamese members, maintained traditional culture of Vietnam, and simultaneously encouraged Vietnamese youth (via community activities) to become future leaders. During Nguyen's tenure as a leader of the community, he had an opportunity to be elected as Chairman of the Vietnam War Memorial Monument Project, featuring 2 soldiers (one American, one Vietnamese), standing side-by-side, ready for combat. Two-hundred fifty-thousand dollars (\$250,000) was spent for that monument. The purpose of this monument is to honor the millions of Vietnamese that died for the freedom of Vietnam and to remember the heroic sacrifices of 58,000 US troops and 987 Oklahomans killed in the Vietnam War. The memorial also serves as a tourist attraction for the city, and helps further develop the growing Asian District of Oklahoma City, not only with the business aspect, but the cultural aspect as well. This Memorial was dedicated on July, 8, 2017, and can be seen at NW 24th and N Classen Blvd.

Since then, Lt Col Nguyen was one of the key speakers at the re-dedication of the Midwest City High School (MCHS) Bomber Vietnam Memorial & Plaza in 2020, he was recognized by Mayor Matt Dukes and Senator Brenda Stanley (among other dignitaries) at Midwest City's Welcome Home, Vietnam Veterans ceremony in 2021, and was ultimately presented with the specially designed POW/MIA flag as a symbol of appreciation and friendship from the Midwest City Veterans Memorial.

