



*Ronald Ralph Beaman, Captain, U.S. Army
August 21, 1941-June 27, 1969*

My most meaningful Memorial Day memory was visiting the Vietnam Memorial a few years after it had opened. While I had been on the national mall before, coming upon the sea of people who had assembled was emotional. The base of the long walk along the memorial was lined with boots, dog tags, notes, and photographs. Most notable was the crush of people looking for names on the memorial and pushing close to the wall to get their etching. You couldn't walk by without touching the memorial and fingering the marble to feel the letters of each name. My parents were with me on this trip, and my mother was one of those people looking for a specific name: Ronald Beaman. As we walked along looking for his name, she told stories about her memories of Ron from college. He was fun-loving, athletic, a fraternity guy, and man of deep faith. She talked about how he came to visit her and my father after they were first married and how much that meant to her. It was the last

time she saw him alive.

When we found Ron's name, it was a sacred moment. There it was. I can still see my father's stretched arms making the rubbing for my mom, and when she had the paper etching in her hands, we all wept. Little did I know then that I would end up being a faculty member at Pepperdine, where Ron was a student and drafted into the army to later become an officer. Our paths are crossing once again in the telling of this story. Ron lost his life while retrieving an allied fallen soldier in 1969.

The theologian Frederick Buechner writes, "When you remember me, it means you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are... It means if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart." Isn't it true, that we all hope someone will remember us; that others will tell our story of how we left our mark?

This Memorial Day I am remembering Ron Beaman; someone I never met, but whose life left a mark on my mother and whose story now is leaving a mark on me. I invite you to take some time to tell the stories of those who have served selflessly, so that in doing so we allow others to imagine their faces and hear their voices. Buechner reminds us, "to remember the past is to see that we are here today by grace, that we have survived as a gift."

Regan Schaffer
Divisional Dean & Professor of Management
Business Administration Division
Seaver College