



## **Washburn completes fundraising for new veterans memorial**

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thanks to leadership gifts from a pair of veterans, Washburn University recently completed fundraising to build a new veterans memorial on campus. The memorial will replace and expand upon an existing monument in the heart of campus near Morgan Hall, at the southwest corner of 18th Street and College Avenue.

Washburn University President Jerry Farley and his wife, Susan, kicked off the campaign in August with a \$50,000 matching gift challenge. After donors exceeded that matching challenge, a significant gift from John, ba '73, jd '84, and Kristina Dietrick, ba '91, helped complete the \$140,000 goal.

Farley, who was himself a drill sergeant and drill sergeant instructor in the U.S. Army, has made this project a personal priority and is thankful 80 donors joined him in realizing the vision of an expanded and updated new veterans memorial.

"Washburn has a long history of both military service and honoring those who served, and we are thankful to everyone who contributed to the project so veterans will continue to have a site and memorial commensurate with their sacrifice," Farley said.

John Dietrick, a member of the Washburn University board of regents, is also an Army veteran who served two tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He and Kristina were honored to make the capstone gift for the memorial.

"Making that gift was a very proud, humble and emotional moment for us," he said. "Our veterans deserve this. We sincerely appreciate everything Dr. Farley and the Washburn administration are doing to bring this meaningful tribute to fruition."

The plaque on the existing memorial, which is more than 30-years-old and has weathered considerably, will be honorably retired to Topeka Cemetery, and a new plaza and array of monuments will take its place, serving as a central site on campus for remembrance and memorializing the military contributions of Washburn students in all of America's foreign wars.

This new memorial will center around a sculpted bronze fallen soldier sculpture telling the story of Washburn University's military veterans, and a seven-foot-tall stone bearing all 47 names of those who served and died in Vietnam. The Vietnam memorial will be joined by seven additional standing stones arranged around the perimeter to commemorate each of the U.S. military's six branches of service plus one additional in recognition of the many nurses who also served in war. The site will be anchored with

three flagpoles flying the American, Kansas, and POW/MIA flags, and the open-air nature of the plaza will make it a natural focal point on campus for veteran and memorial activities.

Washburn University has a reputation for being a steadfastly veteran- and military-friendly campus. It was the first school in Kansas to earn the designation of Purple Heart University in recognition of its continued service to veterans and members of the military, and regularly receives the highest possible Military Friendly® status for its commitment, effort and success in creating opportunity for the military community. It frequently serves as a popular site in Topeka for Veteran's Day and other memorial celebrations.

**Contact:**

Sarah Towle  
Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation  
[stowle@wualumni.org](mailto:stowle@wualumni.org)  
785.670.1744