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Acknowledgements

by

Kevin Bowen and David Hunt

All of us at the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences are extremely grateful to our friends at the Trotter Institute for the opportunity to collaborate on this issue of the *Trotter Review*. It seems especially appropriate that this issue is being published at the time of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the center, named after William Joiner, Jr., an African-American veteran of the Vietnam War and the university's first director of Veterans' Affairs who died of cancer in 1981.

For those who fought the war in Vietnam as well as the other wars of this century, the contributions and leadership of African-American soldiers and veterans have been an undeniable part of their personal history. For those involved in the struggle for better comprehension, analysis, and understanding of the issues facing returning veterans and their families, the leadership provided by African-American veterans has been a vital and integral part of the movement. Yet, for the greater part of our society the facts and the implications of these activities remain unnoted and little understood. We hope this issue of the *Trotter Review* will underscore the contributions made by African-American soldiers and veterans and will foster more discussion of their experience, its significance and its implications.

We wish to express our thanks to the staff of the *Trotter Review* and to our contributors. Those who have worked in the field of veterans advocacy will recognize the names of the contributors. Ron Armstead, a counselor, activist, and one of the founders of the Veterans Benefits Clearinghouse, Inc., a national model of veteran community involvement, has had a long association with the Joiner Center. A member of the center's advisory board and a former research coordinator at the center, his work in establishing the Black Veterans Braintrust in collaboration with the Congressional Black Caucus and advocating for greater representation for African-American veterans within the Department of Veterans Affairs has had a national impact.

Dr. Erwin Parson's groundbreaking work in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder has received national recognition as well. The center is proud of its long association with Dr. Parson, who in 1989 was named the center's first Visiting Professor of War and Social Consequences. Dr. Parson prepared the groundwork for the center's Full Circle Project and led the first group of twelve veterans returning to Vietnam in 1990. Dr. Parson currently serves as a member of the board of directors of the William Joiner Foundation.

Yusef Komunyakaa, one of the most gifted and eloquent poets to emerge from the Vietnam War, has been a frequent visitor to the UMass/Boston campus for



David Hunt (left) and Kevin Bowen

readings; he has been a member of the center's Writers' Workshop faculty, and took part in the first delegation of veteran writers to return to Vietnam to meet with their Vietnamese counterparts at a conference in Hanoi co-sponsored by the center in 1990. Liz Allen, a central figure among woman veterans, has played a leadership role in the center's conferences on women and the military and at the annual conference on veterans concerns in Washington, D.C. In Jacqueline Howard-Matthews, we have discovered, we hope, a new friend. In Dr. Harold Horton, we have called on the expertise of another good friend and supporter.

Finally, we would like to thank Professor William King of the University of Colorado who agreed to take on the task of serving as guest editor of this special issue of the *Trotter Review*. We hope in some small measure this issue will constitute a tribute to the contributions and sacrifices of African-American veterans and to the legacy of Bill Joiner.

Kevin Bowen and David Hunt are co-directors of the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences, University of Massachusetts at Boston.