

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2102

Kevin Bowen, Director
William Joiner Center
University of Massachusetts, Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125

September 27, 2000

Dear Mr. Bowen:

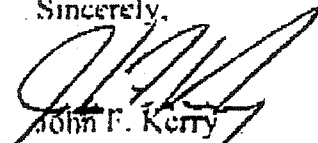
I am writing to express my support for the William Joiner Center's Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Program on the Vietnamese Diaspora. One of the many consequences of U. S. involvement in Southeast Asia has been the growth of significant Vietnamese communities in the United States and other countries. While tragic in origin, this dislocation and dispersion of Vietnamese peoples has enriched cultures not only in the United States, but around the world. Twenty five years after the end of the war in Vietnam, the Rockefeller Program offers a unique opportunity for scholars and researchers to study the impacts, shifts, and consistencies in Vietnamese culture.

The William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences and the University of Massachusetts-Boston are ideally situated for such an auspicious undertaking. Having built a reputation for excellence in scholarship, cultural exchange and community service and involvement, the Joiner Center can now expand in this framework to build an even more extensive and encompassing academic endeavor.

We applaud the Joiner Center for its association with the Rockefeller Foundation in this enterprise. That association and the careful review of proposals from the many countries where Vietnamese reside and from diverse points of view will ensure the scholarly excellence as well as the integrity and ultimate success of this important undertaking.

I commend and extend my welcome and congratulations to the initial group of fellows selected. Choosing two established and accomplished scholars from Vietnam and two emerging scholars from the United States assures a diversity of views and combines fresh perspectives with time-tested observation. It is essential and critical that a project of this magnitude regarding a phenomenon as sweeping as the Vietnamese diaspora consider candidates from all countries, political backgrounds and cultural orientations to achieve free and unencumbered inquiry. Only through such a free and thorough inquiry and generous sharing of findings will the cause of Vietnamese people be advanced.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry
United States Senator

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