

Roxana Class of 1966 Dedicates Memorial to Classmates Lost in Vietnam War

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ROXANA - It was a powerful day for the Roxana High School Class of 1966 as they dedicated a memorial to [four classmates who were lost](#) in the Vietnam War.

On Saturday, April 27, 2024, many members of the class joined Roxana Superintendent Debra Kreutztrager, VFW Post #1308 and the South Roxana American Legion to celebrate the installation of a bench at Roxana High School. The bench includes the names of the four young men who graduated with the Class of 1966 before their deaths in Vietnam: PFC Wayne Carnell, Specialist Five Bill Peyton, Specialist Four Terry Dallape and Sergeant Duke Mason.

“They were all lost to us on foreign soil in a most violent way decades ago,” said Patricia Weir. “The class of 1966 wishes to memorialize our fallen classmates on this campus, where we all knew them. They were our classmates, our teammates and our friends, and we miss them.”

Over the years, Weir and a few other women have made a point to visit the graves of the men, all of whom are buried near their hometown. But as the time passed, they seemed to be the only visitors.

Weir pointed out that the men were young when they passed away, and they don’t have many known living relatives left. She became concerned that when the Class of 1966 was gone, there wouldn’t be anyone to honor their sacrifice.

“Most of you know that Terry Dallape was my best friend,” said Bill Lengacher. “I always think about how different my life would have turned out if he had made it back. I’m sure we’ve all experienced that same feeling. We never had a chance to grow up together, let alone grow old together.”

With the help of her classmates, including Lengacher, Weir organized a fundraiser to build a memorial for Carnell, Peyton, Dallape and Mason. The class donated most of the money and welcomed additional donations from the South Roxana American Legion.

The black granite bench, made to look like the Vietnam Memorial Wall, now sits on the Roxana High School campus. The Class of 1966 also planted a maple tree in honor of all the military veterans who served from their class. Kreutztrager thanked the Class of 66 for their decision to memorialize the men at Roxana High School.

“The way you came together to make this day possible has also shown us that the friendships and the memories made at Roxana High School last a lifetime,” she added.

Jerry Howard and Ron Swain with the American Legion also spoke about the sacrifice made by the four men, who they called “brothers in arms.” Swain recognized the men with certificates from the Illinois House of Representatives. The ceremony concluded with a three-volley salute and a prayer by Sandy Mayhew.

“I know I speak for the entire Class of 66 when I say we’re so proud to be alumni of this wonderful school,” Weir said.