



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2024

CONTACT

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR JOHNSON, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND 2FM ANNOUNCE
RESTORATION OF CHICAGO'S VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL**

CHICAGO – Today, Mayor Johnson, alongside the Department of Fleet and Facilities Management (2FM), and Kevin Barszcz, Director of the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs (MOVA) announced the restoration of the Chicago Remembers Vietnam Veterans Memorial after years of deferred maintenance.

"Our veterans made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and it is our duty and responsibility to honor them however we can. The Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs is dedicated to ensuring veterans have access to 100% of their earned benefits through our collaborative partnerships across federal, state, and local levels," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "I extend heartfelt gratitude to all who have served, with a special recognition for our Vietnam veterans. It is with great pride that I declare March 29th as the official Vietnam Veterans Day in the City of Chicago."

The Chicago Remembers Vietnam Veterans Memorial, situated along Chicago's Riverwalk, stands as a tribute to all veterans of the armed forces who served in the Vietnam War. Dedicated on November 11, 2005, the memorial features the engraved names of 2,936 Illinois veterans.

"When I received the call from a Vietnam Veteran about the need for repair, as several names and inscriptions had faded and become difficult to read, I could hear the significance not only to him but to the larger veteran community and their families in his voice. Having a personal connection to the Vietnam War through my father's service, I made a personal commitment to lead the efforts to restore this monument," said **Kevin Barszcz, Director of MOVA**.

“Having been present at the dedication of this memorial in 2005, I witnessed the profound impact it had on those in attendance, many of whom had personal connections to the names inscribed on the wall,” said **Michelle Woods, Deputy Commissioner of Fleet and Facilities Management**. “When we were first approached about this project, I knew it would be a challenge. But I’m proud that this administration figured out a way to get it done.”

Deputy Commissioner Woods added, “We have implemented an ongoing maintenance plan, including regular inspections and cleanings, to ensure the longevity of this monument.”

Jim Balcer, former Alderman of the 11th ward, Vietnam War veteran, and the previous Director of Veteran Affairs, added, “From our initial conversations, I knew Kevin was the right guy. Through his leadership, this monument has been brought back to its former glory and we are actively looking at other monuments citywide. I commend his dedication and look forward to the ongoing positive impact he will make on our veteran community.”

The City of Chicago invites all to join the Veteran Community on March 29th for National Vietnam Veterans Day, commemorating the sacrifices of our veterans. The event will commence at 9:00 a.m. at the Chicago Remembers Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Riverwalk.

###