

# “Beauty” vs. “Duty”

### Controversy concerning the National Veterans’ Park’s entrance sign comes to an end.

By Lilli Harris Lee

The war is over concerning the National Veterans’ Park’s entrance sign in Brentwood. The stone sign, once part of the gateway leading into the Veterans Administration’s property has come down. “Beauty, Honor, Country,” were the words etched into the sign and strongly opposed by some local citizens, especially Vietnam Veteran Robert L. Rosebrock.

“The [Veterans’ Park Conservancy] persuaded the local VA to donate more than \$1 million of Veterans seriously needed healthcare money to help build this gated plaza, which serves more as an entry into Brentwood and doesn’t really benefit Veterans,” explains Rosebrock.

The phrase “Beauty, Honor, Country,” was inspired by the United States Military Academy at West Point’s motto: “Duty, Honor, Country.” The change from ‘Duty,’ to ‘Beauty,’ may seem harmless to those not familiar with military history but to certain passionate veterans like Rosebrock, altering the words was an insult.

“Duty,” explains Mr. Rosebrock, “is such a paramount responsibility in protecting our country that some men and women risk their own lives by going above and beyond the call of duty.”

Rosebrock led a campaign to get the sign removed, enlisting the help of local news media as well as West Point graduate Colonel Buzz Aldrin who, after reading the ‘Point/Counterpoint’ column in the September issue of this publication, asked how he could get involved. The fight made it to Washington D.C. where soon after Col. Aldrin talked to the Secretary of Veterans’ Affairs, the sign was ordered to come down. Rosebrock defends their victory. “Those who think Veterans are making too much of this should read General Douglas MacArthur’s famed “Duty, Honor, Country” speech that he gave to the West Point Cadets in 1962. Hopefully they will then have a better understanding and respect for what those three words truly mean.”

That very speech is what Sue Young, Founder and Executive Director of the VPC had in mind when she helped create the “Beauty, Honor, Country,” sign. Young says that because MacArthur directed his words solely to the Corps of Cadets, the phrase is most closely identified with that branch of the military. She says that the National Veterans’ Park should carry a sign that includes all veterans, not just cadets. Therefore

a compromise of words: “Beauty, Honor, Country” was created. “Unfortunately, a certain minority became very vocal about something that was misdirected and misunderstood.” Says Young.

Since its inception twenty years ago, the Veterans’ Park Conservancy has vigorously maintained the splendor, integrity and upkeep of the 700 acres of public land. The group is responsible for planting trees, placing American flag banners down Veterans’ Parkway and replacing the rusted chain link fence surrounding the property. Sue Young disagrees with those who were angered by the sign.

“We believe it was appropriate since it is a memorial park, and it is honoring our veterans.”

Good intentions aside, the sign “Beauty, Honor, Country,” has come down. A new sign that reads, “Honoring our Veterans,” will hang in its place. Robert Rosebrock has an alternate idea. “Since it’s supposed to be a tribute to our Veterans,” he says, “how about just two words: “Thank you.”

**Below:** The questionable inclusion of the word “Beauty” rather than “Duty” on the National Veterans’ Park’s entrance sign incited community debate recently. The sign has now been removed.

