

克利夫蘭越南華僑 Gia Hoa Ryan 女士,明年將是她來美國 50 年,她 1971 年代表越南政府到美國做訪問,按她說的,50 年就是一瞬間。

12 月 23 日,與來自底特律的 Joseph Gyulay 和他的太太 Marisha 會面,Joseph Gyulay 是伊利華報多年的支持者,這是 Joseph Gyulay 第一次把他的醫生太太介紹我認識,我們一起在 Pier W 餐廳午餐,我贈送了福字蘋果,感恩大家給我多年的支持。他們是醫生、律師和企業家,還加上 Ryan 社會公衆人物,今天我們一起慶祝 Ryan 在克利夫蘭洛克菲勒公園越南花園將迎來的雕塑奠基活動(如果不是疫情早就運到美國了)。

我們一起回顧我們來美國的夢想, Ryan 說:時間一晃就是 50 年,她發起的越南公園就等雕塑到美國,還有她投資的越南學校已經開業,我們都為她對社區的貢獻而感動,她的多年律師朋友 Joseph Patrick Meissner 表示:做社區服務不容易,他目睹



# 追夢路上砥礪前行

了他在美國的成長過程和看到我們新移民在美國的勤奮努力。

Ryan 自強不息,不靠別人,敢於面對所有的困難,她現在已經是當奶奶的人,在克利夫蘭她是一個名人,她參政,曾經是克利夫蘭市長辦公室協調人員。Ryan 創辦了 friendship 基金會,關心幫助他人,尤其對來自越南的優秀青年,幫助他們來美國留學,畢業後回越南開醫院做貢獻。還有她將自己在越南的家人和朋友 40 多人帶到美國來,她要求他們在沒有成美國公民之前 絕不能依賴美國。

Ryan 出生於一個良好家庭,父親是個商人,他有兄弟姐妹 12 人,她是老大,她說:她的一生很感謝父親,她的父親給她足夠的自由,在越南像她這樣的女孩,13 歲家庭就讓你出嫁結婚,但她沒有,她接受最好的教育,現在她在越南最窮的地方開設學校。她的一句話:人要對自己有信心。而我學到的:人生在不同階段,跟着覺悟做不同的事情。Ryan 是最好的榜樣。 浦瑛

“For many years I have had a dream,” declared Director Gia Hoa Ryan, the Executive Director and Founder of the Friendship Foundation of American Vietnamese. I wanted to build something which would honor both our Vietnamese people and the many veterans—both American and Vietnamese—who had sacrificed so much to help my country.”

She had seen others who had similar memorial dreams, (in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King.)

“In the early 1990’s,” she recalled, “Some Vietnamese veterans applied to the Cleveland Cultural Garden Federation to establish a garden in memory of Vietnamese veterans. This effort was led by Mr. Le Nguyen, a Vietnamese veteran who worked on resettlement for almost thirty years under the direction of the Cleveland Community Relations Board. Despite the hard work of the Vietnamese community and veteran leaders, unfortunately their vision of a statue and soldiers memorial was rejected. ‘These are ‘cultural’ gardens,’ not for ‘war memorials’ they were told.”

An effort was launched by American veterans to honor their comrades and provide a memorial. “I studied and looked into this,” remembered Ms. Ryan, “The project was headed by a brilliant Attorney—Patrick McLaughlin. Other veteran leaders included ever-persistent Ray Saikus and Judge Michael Jackson (the quiet-spoken inspirer) supported by many others. They did achieve some success and remade the Veterans’ Memorial quadrangle near Cleveland Public Square.”

That inspired Ms. Ryan and others in the Vietnamese and American communities. “We concluded it’s time for us to promote a project

to honor both Vietnamese veterans and US veterans as well as the Vietnamese people in the US. This would be called ‘The Vietnamese Cultural Garden.’”

Dan kept saying to me: ‘I know you would like this other third site.’ He took us all to that site.

“When I first saw Dan’s site, I knew right away this would be the home for our garden at

many in our neighborhoods did not even know what a cultural garden was,” Ms. Ryan noted. “Some, when they thought of a garden, pictured a garden growing vegetables. We had to educate everyone on the concept of a cultural garden. Actually, this gave us an idea that we should add vegetables, Vietnamese ones that have form and beauty, to the garden plantings.”

As for the permits, the group had to go thru the Federation Design and Planning Committees to present all plans and gain approval. Then they had to appear at Cleveland City Development and the Park committee for presentation and a vote on the project. Through this time-consuming and tedious, but absolutely necessary process, the Vietnamese group had good support from Charlene Crowley and Lori Ashyk, Executive Director for the Federation.

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## THE DREAM IS COMING TRUE...



By Joseph Patrick Meissner

But how could this be accomplished? “We were still looking how to contact the right persons to get the best location and how to build a garden for veterans—American and Vietnamese. One day I mentioned my dream to some people who had started the International Hall of Fame. This was the Hanson Family—Dan and his sister Debbie and Mama Hanson.”

The group needed to get permission from Cleveland City Council who are in charge of the Garden lands. “We were so fortunate,” remembered Ms. Ryan. “We had support from Councilperson Matt Zone whose family has always been so helpful to our Vietnamese Community. He would shepherd our enabling resolution through City Council.”

But where would be the Garden’s site? “We know exactly where to establish this garden,” the Hansons smiled.

“So,” continued Ms. Ryan, “on January 12 in 2014 on my birthday we met at the sites of many gardens along Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard. This included Dan and Debbie Hanson and Sheila Crawford, past President of the Federation and the dynamic dean of Cleveland’s Irish Community. There were three lots available at that time—the first was pretty big, and the second was okay, but

711 Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard, under the hill of the Cleveland Greenhouse gardens. This reminded me of the geographic shape of Viet Nam and included the hill like our country’s mountains.”

Now the birth place was found. But the group had to get the drawings, designs, permits, and definitely lots of money. They sponsored an international competition for design. From all over the world they received many design submissions and ideas.

“Since 2014,” Ms. Ryan summarized, “We did find a great garden designer. She has helped us develop the birth place for a great cultural garden. This is Charlene Crowley, who is a Landscape Industry Certified Manager and James Freireich, her co-worker at Eastside Landscaping, Inc. They have lots of know-how and proficiency from working on other gardens as well.”

Community support moreover had to be gained for the garden. “At first,

