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Patriotic Ceremony Honors UD Veterans

Against the backdrop of a picture perfect day, students, faculty and staff gathered on the mall in front of the Haggerty Science Center to pay tribute to veterans who have served our country.

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The ceremony, organized by UD's Army ROTC students, started just after noon today with the Presentation of Colors by the ROTC from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Provost Jonathan J. Sanford opened the ceremony, noting, "This day provides us the opportunity to thank the veterans in our midst, and to thank those ROTC students at the University of Dallas and the University of Texas at Arlington, with whom we partner in forming our future service men and women, for responding to the call to put their lives, not just their careers but their very lives, in service to their country."

He added, "Love for America's founding principles is genuine at the University of Dallas, as is love for God and neighbor, expressed in principles of solidarity and the common good. Our rigorous and faithful curricular and extracurricular emphases prepare students for dual citizenship in both the city of man and the city of God, and make our graduates uniquely prepared to serve in positions of civil, military and professional leadership."

Following Sanford's remarks, Michael Leshner, MBA '87, an admissions adviser in the Gupta College of Business, shared about his experience in the Air Force working in a variety of finance and payroll roles on bases in the U.S. and in Vietnam during the war. He also entertained the audience with his guitar, singing the anthems of each military branch, while inviting those veterans in attendance to stand and be acknowledged.

"A lot of people when they think of the Air Force, they think of pilots, those who flew planes, those who fueled the planes," Leshner said. "But what they may not know is that there are a lot of support people who you never hear about that are actually supporting that mission, and I was one of those. I worked in the USAF Accounting & Finance Office during the Vietnam War."

He added that his time on a base in Vietnam gave him a different perspective on the war and the people: "A lot of times when people hear about the Vietnam War they go, 'why did we do that' and 'why were we there,' but when you get to actually meet the people, see how wonderful they are, and understand how much they wanted us to help them retain a democracy, you really get a different feeling."

In Sanford's closing remarks, he thanked the gathered crowd. "May this day serve as a lasting reminder of the duty each one of us has to dedicate our lives in service to others."