June 12, 195

Andrew Biancur
4174 E. Cumorah Dr.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84124

Dear Andi,

I appreciate your thoughtfulness to include me and my family in the dedication ceremony. My daughter, Wendy, was very interested in coming with me. However, her husband is a Marine F18 pilot stationed in Aviano and flying over Bosinia for 6 months. That is the very weekend he is supposed to come home! If his plans change, she said she would fly up from S. Carolina.

I would be honored to be there for the dedication ceremony. I really don't know any of his classmates. I do feel very good that he is being remembered in this way. I could come out Thursday to be there with you for the Friday afternoon ceremony. I have made several trips to Colo. since Christmas, and since my mother is very ill, we are selling her household furnishings and possibly her house in August. My expenses have been so high for all of that, if you can help at all, I would appreciate it. But, we can talk about that later.

I once wrote a eulogy about Val for a class in graduate school. I will include that to help you know a little about him. I remember him telling me about his background and how he experienced no almost no support for his education or achievements from his family. He told me he grew up with no books and stole a book from the library in first grade so he could own one. His first purchase after graduating from the Academy was the series Great Books of the Western World.

Apparently, at the Deerfield Academy where he went to prep school, he had a headmaster who was very interested in him. He saw him play soccer and baseball in high school and offered him a scholarship for prep school. He encouraged him to apply for colleges as well as the Academy. One day he was playing as a shortstop and a scout from the Pittsburgh Pirates was watching him play. He offered him a contract that day. But part way through the game, his father came with a telegram from the Air Force Academy that he was accepted. He father wanted him to play ball. His coach told him to accept the appointment. He said he had to look on the map to find out where Colo. was!

He showed me the articles from the first class-he was the first cadet to sign in in the class of 1959. I remember him telling about the day he flunked a mechanics test with a 69 and how devastated he was. Again, someone took notice of him and gave him another chance. He was really grateful to be allowed to stay in school.

I met Val while I was working in the admissions office at the

Academy during the summer before my senior year at CU. I was a rebound date, since he was engaged to someone else. That night he asked me what I planned to name my first girl. I said, "Wendy", and he replied that that was his favorite name and he was sure someday we would be married.

He had high aspirations and was so proud to be the first person in his family to go to college. I think the eulogy still says what impact he has had on my life. Our daughter, Wendy, looks very much like him, is full of life, and has three great little children. Jack, her husband, is headed for command and staff school when they get back. His background is so similar to Val's, it is unreal.

Let me know if you need more information. We weren't married that long-3 years, and he didn't have much to do with his family. But I loved him very much, and he took years to heal the hurt of his loss. But God has been good to me. My husband is a Presbyterian pastor, we have four children (one an Air Force navigator), and a good life.

I taught in colleges and universities for a number of years and am now a full time artist. I do commissions for companies and individuals, have solo shows, and run an after school art school for children. The irony of your dedicating a painting is this: Val liked very much to paint, and often took me to art shows in Greenwich Village while he was stationed at McGuire AF Base. I never saw his art work, since he did it is high school. But when he left for Vietnam, he gave me paints and money for art lessons to keep me busy. I love what I do: it was a real gift to me. It is so appropriate that you have chosen a painting to honor him.

Thank you. I probably will no longer have a home in Colo. Springs, but I can arrange to stay with a friend. I look forward to hearing from you. I will be in Minn. for 2 weeks taking care of my mother-in-law. I plan to be back in Colorado a couple of times in Aug.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Sheppard

Linda Sheppard
44 Ashland Avenue
Pleasantville, NY 10570
914 769 1896

Sorry for the delay - I've been to numerous Parents' Homes caring for parents! I also can't find the eulogy I wrote - but I did find a small piece I wrote on the 25th anniv of his death -

Please return pictures & articles as they are all I have -

A MEMORIAL TO VALMORE WILLIAM BOURQUE
1936 - 1964

Twenty five years ago this week my husband's plane was shot down in Vietnam. It was to have been his last flight before coming home. The world crashed in on Wendy and me.

During those years in the 60s, it was not possible as a war widow to speak up and defend his being there. No one wants war, and the pain of loss had to be borne silently amid all the loud, sometimes "violent" protests for peace. I'll never forget the signs of protestors outside the classroom where I taught at the University of Washington which read, "American Officers are Murderers."

One of his diary entries read, "Linda, it something happens to me I want you to know that it was important that we are here. I have seen communism and it doesn't work. It is terrible what it does to crush people's spirits. Freedom is so necessary, I want that for others. But I don't want to die."

He may have had a different view of the war later. But what is important to me is that in three years this man gave me a daughter, he started me off in my art career, and he gave me his ability to forgive himself and start over after failing. By his sacrifice, I learned the value of committing my time, money, or life to people and worthy ideals.

God has been faithful to Wendy and me. He gave us a new family to love and to love us. He brought people into my life who have supported and encouraged me to develop my faith. God never left me alone to wallow in grief, but has walked with me out of that grief.

I thank God for this man - for his life and for his sacrifice. And I thank God for God's faithfulness to me.

Please pray for healing and understanding for all those who lived through that difficult war.

Linda Sheppard