



**2018 MARGARET CHASE SMITH AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AWARD
NOMINATION FORM**

Deadline for Submitting Nominations: Thursday, May 3, 2018

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name of Nominee: Dan Evans & Ralph Munro

Job Title (if applicable): Former Governor & Former Secretary of State

Address: Dan Evans [REDACTED]
Ralph Munro [REDACTED]

Telephone (please include daytime and cell phone numbers, if possible): Dan Evans [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] & Ralph Munro [REDACTED]

Email Address: Dan Evans [REDACTED] and Ralph Munro [REDACTED]

Short Description of Specific Acts of Courage/Reason for Nomination: The courage shown by Dan Evans and Ralph Munro during the refugee crisis that followed the fall of Saigon in 1975.

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nomination Submitted By: Secretary Kim Wyman, Washington State

Address: 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW, Room 250, Olympia, WA 98504

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In addition to this form, please provide a separate statement or letter (approximately 600-1200 words) explaining your reason(s) for nominating this individual, including a detailed description of how the nominee has demonstrated uncommon courage and/or exceptional character in pursuit of the common good. Emphasis should be placed on contemporary acts of courage, rather than examples from the distant past.

Please submit completed form and supporting nomination materials to the NASS office no later than Thursday, May 3, 2018 via mail or e-mail to:

Stacy Dodd, NASS Executive Assistant
National Association of Secretaries of State
444 N Capitol Street NW- Suite 401
Washington DC 20001
PHONE: (202) 624-3525
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Two Profiles in Courage

Following the fall of Saigon in 1975, 130,000 South Vietnamese refugees sought asylum in the United States or its allies. Most were educated people who had worked closely with Americans during the war and feared reprisals by the Communists. Yet a Gallup poll that spring found that only 36 percent of Americans favored Vietnamese immigration. “Many feared job losses and increased public welfare,” *The Los Angeles Times* reported.

California Governor Jerry Brown, the liberal Democrat who had just succeeded Ronald Reagan, balked at resettling refugees in his state. “There is something a little strange about saying, ‘Let’s bring in 500,000 more people,’ when we can’t take care of the one million out of work,” Brown said.

When he read that statement, Washington Governor Dan Evans was incensed. For starters, it wasn’t a half-million more people, Evans says. “And these were people being driven from their home country. They had no place to go. America, after all, is a nation of immigrants.”

What happened next has been called one of the state’s finest hours, a profile in courage by Evans and a young intern named Ralph Munro, who would go on to serve five terms as Washington’s Secretary of State. The roles Evans and Munro played in the refugee crisis are documented in an Academy-Award nominated documentary, *Last Days in Vietnam*.

Evans dispatched Munro to Camp Pendleton, California, the West Coast processing center, to see what Washington could do to help. “If you see Brown,” Evans said, “remind him what it says on the face of the Statue of Liberty.”

Munro toured the sprawling refugee “tent city” before meeting with Camp Pendleton’s commander.

“Do you want these people?” he said.

“Yes,” said Munro. “I’m pretty sure we do.”

Governor Evans’ response was “Absolutely.”

Munro got on a loudspeaker and announced that those who wanted to do so could come to Washington State. Many quickly stepped forward. “A lot of them probably thought they were going to Washington, D.C.,” Evans says, chuckling.

While the transit of the refugees was being arranged, Evans’ office was contacting churches, community groups and other possible host families. “We found more volunteers than we could handle,” he remembers.

Soon the first 500 began making their way to Seattle, followed by 3,500 more. On May 8, 1975, Evans personally carried a letter to President Gerald Ford formally advising him that Washington State was agreeing to be involved in the resettlement effort. Ford soon created the Presidential Commission on Refugees and pushed through the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975. “We were able to bring the commission the experience we had with the refugees,” Evans says. “That helped create the methodology for dealing with them.”

Dan and Nancy Evans' personal story within the broader story of outreach to the Vietnamese is perhaps even more compelling as a metaphor for America as the land of freedom.

When the governor and first lady went to visit the refugees at Camp Murray, Washington's National Guard headquarters south of Tacoma, they met the Nguyen family—husband, pregnant wife and their five children. When the sixth child was born, they named him Evans Nguyen in honor of the governor whose state welcomed them.

"We got to know the family and saw their focus on education for their children," the former governor and U.S. senator recalls. "The first five were all valedictorians of their high school classes. As we waited for the invitation to my namesake's graduation, none came. We contacted the parents and learned that they were reluctant to invite us because he was not the valedictorian! But he was in the top 10 in his class."

There were two shrines in the Nguyen house. "One was a religious shrine," Evans says. "The other one was in the living room where six UW graduation certificates were displayed."

As for Ralph Munro, the former governor says, "He is a man whose whole adult life has been dedicated to helping others." When Munro retired after 20 years as secretary of state, Evans said, "Ralph was the one who taught me how to care."

"The governor is the one who stepped up to the plate," Munro says of the refugee crisis. Occasionally a child of one of those refugees will spot the former secretary of state on the street. "They'll say, 'My grandpa says you saved my life.' People don't realize that when you're in public service you have so many rewards that go on for decades and decades."