

**Conferring Ceremony of
the Vietnam President's Medal of Friendship
to
Ms. Virginia B. Foote
Co-Founder and President of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Hanoi, 27 July 2007**

Introduction by the MC from Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Perhaps all of us here know very well Madame Virginia Foote's contribution to the promotion of friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and the United States. The President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has decided to confer the Friendship Medal to Madame Virginia Foote.

I would like to introduce the presence of His Excellency Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vu Xuan Hong, the President of the Vietnam Union of Friendships Organizations, H.E. Mr. Le Van Bang, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, representatives from Ministries of Planning and Investment, Trade, Finance, Public Security and Justice, and senior officials of relevant departments of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the U.S. side, I would like to introduce Madame Virginia Foote and her daughter, Laura Mattison, H.E. Ambassador Michael Marine and other members of the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, representatives of USAID, AmCham, USVTC, and the STAR Project, friends of Madame Foote, and representatives of U.S. companies and organizations.

Announcement of Decision by Mr. Pham Cao Phong, the Chief of MOFA Office:

H.E. Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Madame Virginia Foote,
Ambassador Michael Marine,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow me to read the decision by the President of Vietnam on granting the Friendship Medal to Madame Virginia Foote.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Independence, Freedom and Happiness
Hanoi, May 23, 2007

Decision on Granting the Friendship Medal

The President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, pursuant to Article 103 of the 1992 Constitution of the SRV, pursuant to the law of emulation and commendation, and at the request of the Prime Minister's proposal 525 dated April 27, 2007, decides:

Article 1: Grant the Friendship Medal to Madame Virginia Foote, citizen of the United States of America, Co-Founder and President of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council, for her contribution to the promotion of the normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations.

Article 2: This decision will enter into force on the signing date. The Prime Minister and the Chairman of Presidential Office are responsible for enactment of this decision. On behalf of the SRV, Vice President Truong My Hoa, signed.

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Madame Virginia Foote,
Ambassador Michael Marine,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the President of SRV, I am very glad to present the Friendship Medal to Madame Virginia Foote, the Co-Founder of President of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council. Please join me to share this joy and honor with Madame Virginia Foote.

As you may know, the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council was established in 1989 to promote the normalization of the U.S.-Vietnam relations and Madame Virginia Foote, as the President of the Council, has always played the leading role in the efforts of the Council as well as of U.S. businesses towards full normalization and development of our bilateral relations. She also made important contributions to the finalization of U.S-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement, the agreement of Vietnam's accession to the WTO as well as the U.S. passage of PNTR for Vietnam. Madame Foote is also the person who works tirelessly to increase the people-to-people exchange between the two countries.

With such contributions, Madame Virginia Foote deserves the Friendship Medal of the State of Vietnam. I strongly believe that in any capacity, Madame Virginia Foote will be always the loyal friend of Vietnam and work to further promote the friendship and cooperation between the United States and Vietnam.

On behalf of the government of Vietnam, I would like to take this opportunity to thank other American friends who are present at this ceremony and those who are not here today for their warm sentiment toward Vietnam as well as for their contributions to the U.S-Vietnam relationship.

I believe with your efforts the relations between our two countries will continue to develop.

Once again, congratulations to Madame Foote. I wish you all good health and success.

Remarks by Ms. Virginia Foote, Co-Founder and President of USVTC:

I am deeply honored to be receiving this medal and really it is a tribute to our two countries for the work that we have all done together to normalize relations. Without forgetting the past, we have worked through war legacy issues, and we have also built solid foundations for a future bilateral relationship. American companies, Vietnamese companies, our Congress, your National Assembly, our governments, veterans, many NGOs – I am delighted at how many of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council staff are here today – we’ve all had a wonderful period working on this relationship and I think we are all extremely optimistic about the future.

My first trip to Vietnam was, as Minister Khiem said, 18 years ago and it was really under the leadership and the vision of Vietnam’s Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach and his counterpart then at the Trade Council Ambassador William Sullivan. I feel we have all been operating under their vision now for almost 20 years.

And I am delighted to be receiving such an award but I really think this is an award for our two countries that have built this new relationship. I very much look forward to the next 20 years working here with you in Vietnam.

Thank you again for this great honor.