

2015 One Book One Nebraska

Death Zones & Darling Spies: Seven Years of Vietnam War Reporting,
by Beverly Deepe Kever

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beverly Deepe Kever is a journalist and an educator. She has written numerous academic and professional articles and received awards for her teaching and freedom-of-information endeavors in Hawaii, as well as from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Alumni Association and the University of Nebraska College of Journalism and Mass Communications Alumni Association. She received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, master's degree from Columbia Journalism School, and a doctorate from the University of Hawaii, where she is currently professor emerita.

Before teaching, she worked as a journalist covering the Vietnam War for seven years for *Newsweek*, the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Kever was the longest-serving American correspondent covering the Vietnam War and her coverage of the besieged outpost of Khe Sanh in 1968 was nominated by the *Monitor* for a Pulitzer Prize in international reporting.

ABOUT THE WRITING OF THE BOOK

In this book, Beverly Deepe Kever describes what it was like for a farm girl from Nebraska to find herself halfway around the world as a war correspondent in Vietnam, trying to make sense of one of the nation's bloodiest and bitterest wars. She arrived in Saigon in 1961 as Vietnam's war entered a new phase and American helicopter units and provincial advisers were unpacking.

Kever's trove of tissue-thin memos to editors, along with published and unpublished dispatches for New York and London media, provide the reader with you-are-there descriptions of Buddhist demonstrations and turning-point coups as well as phony ones. Two Vietnamese interpreters, self-described as "darling spies," helped her decode Vietnam's shadow world and subterranean war.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Does the beginning quote by Maya Angelou in the preface indicate Ms. Deepe Kever's summation of the Vietnam War?

The book is not written in chronological order, but its chapters deal with different aspects of military strategy, political implications, and with the lives of many

different people who were impacted by the Vietnam War. Is this structure beneficial and easy to follow?

Can you sense whether Ms. Deepe Kever's attitude toward American involvement in Vietnam changed with time? If so, how did it change, and what do you think motivated the change?

As one of few women journalists covering the Vietnam War, how does the chapter "Her Story as History Too" give readers a sense of Ms. Deepe Kever's perception of the war's impact on the women of Vietnam?

How do you compare the current involvement of women in both journalism and in war itself, with women's involvement during the Vietnam War?

Did you find the final chapter surprising? Discuss why or why not.

Is America's current involvement in wars being reported with the same journalistic integrity that the Vietnam War was? Discuss your perceptions about how war is reported now, and how it was reported 40+ years ago.

