

## A Traditional DTU Reunion for “Those Who Lived the Beautiful Life”

On April 30th, DTU organized a traditional reunion to commemorate the forty-two years of the Liberation of the South, the reunification of the country on April 30th, 1975 and the 131 years of International Labor Day, established on May 1st, 1886. One hundred and seventy representatives, who were young students, intellectuals, writers and artists in the Movement for the patriotic struggle of Central Vietnam from 1954 to 1975, attended the event.



*The meeting*

The reunion started at 2 pm, but many had already arrived by 1:20 pm, as eager as when they left their homes to fight inside enemy territory just 42 years ago. They were the ones who wrote the history of a relentless struggle in blood, fire and suffering, in prison, in public, in factories and in the lecture halls of the Movement in the urban centers of Southern Vietnam, making their contribution to the historic victory of April 30th, which marked the full Liberation of the South and the Reunification of Vietnam.

Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co, DTU President and Provost, gave a speech explaining the meaning and purpose of the traditional reunion, then representatives from Hue, Quang Ngai, Quang Nam and Danang shared their memories. Reminiscing about his time of fighting with such youthful passion and his will to sacrifice his life, Mr. Dinh Tan Phuong, who lives in Quang Ngai, proudly reminded them, *“In those days, we voluntarily left our homes to fight, singing for our countrymen to ‘get up and go’ and join the common forces of the people.”*

When Saigon began fighting, Hue, Danang, and other cities followed. It was the struggle of the young intellectuals, creating exceptional people, such as Nguyen Van Troi, Nhat Chi Mai, Vo Thi Thang, Nguyen Thai Binh, Nguyen Tam Vang, Tran Quang Long, and Tran Phu Quy, and also giving birth to the legendary, tempestuous life of Mr. Le Cong Co's. He was once the Chairperson of the Student Federation for Liberation of Mid-Central Vietnam's revolutionary struggle.

Do Hung Luan, Nguyen Cam, Le Van Tho and others, disemboweled themselves to fight the prison system. When asked about his memories of the time he was active in the student movement, Mr. Luong Thanh Liem, Secretary General of the Danang General Student Union from 1970 to 1975, said emotionally, *“There are many things to remember about the Movement. To meet all of you here is like being back in those arduous days, with their abundance of savagery. I can only say thank you all, whether still alive or fallen, to have given me one more day.”*

And there are still many things to be remembered about those who lived the beautiful life, in the urban Movement of the South, and in Central Vietnam, in particular.

The people of the Movement always find their own ways to continue giving and serving, and they have made many contributions worth mentioning. Mr. Le Van Lan, who lives in Hue, related that Le Phuong Thao, or Le Cong Co, directly led the urban movement in Hue. After the liberation, Mr. Co left politics, took an early retirement and plunged into education, founding DTU. The university now has population of 20,000 students and is in the top 20 nationally ranked universities. Although still facing the many difficulties of a private university, Mr. Co still remembers his old teammates and the founding of the revolution that once supported, protected and helped him. With the university, he helped to build and repair houses, help families go to university. He also helped his comrades from the Movement overcome their difficulties in life, with donations of over 1.2 billion VND.

Mr. Nguyen Huu Dinh, founder of the Hue Research Institute, published the renowned Hue Studies for many years, about the culture of the city, and earned the respect of the Hue academics, as well as their peers worldwide. The poet Vo Que pioneered and contributed to the entertainment industry, with the “Hue Songs of the Perfume River”, turning the city into a must-see for tourists, helping thousands of citizens make a healthy living from its culture. Along with Vo Que's generation, Mr. Nguyen Duy Hien is known by all people in the city as the organizer of the Hue Festivals, since the CODEV Vietnam-France festival began in the 1990s. The success of the Hue Festivals has helped accelerate the development of Hue into Vietnam's festival city.



*Mr. Le Van Lan (middle) comes from Hue city*

With the passing of time, the once boisterous generation of South Vietnamese youth is now growing old, making room for a modern, progressive generation, but they are left worrying about how to educate new generations on their heroic history. Efforts have been made recently to record the beauty of the time of the urban movement, by poet Tan Hoai Da Vu and Mr. Nguyen Nhat, who authored “Portrait of a Generation”, in 2007, and by Mr. Tran Thuc, Mr. Hung Dung, Mr. Buu Nam and Mr. Ngo Thoi Don who wrote “Writing about the Way to Fight”. The Hue City Union also published “Historical Events in the Urban Movement of Youths and Students in Hue, 1954-1975” and the Danang Student Union published “That’s the Time We Had”, in 2011. Many other memoirs have been written by former key figures in the Movement, such as Le Phuong Thao, Nguyen Dac Xuan and Vo Que.

On March 29th, 2012, to portray a picture of the movement for patriotic struggle of youth and students in the Southern cities from 1954 to 1975, DTU partnered with the Tre publishing house in Ho Chi Minh City to produce the first four volumes of the series “Đáp L?i Sông Núi”, directed by Provost Le Cong Co. The first four volumes, compilations of memoirs, of rich, literary and artistic stories, have now been extended, with eleven new volumes. This will contribute to the education of future generations about the glorious, heroic past of their ancestors, who sacrificed their youth and even their lives for the one ideal, for Peace, Independence, and a United Fatherland. This will help today’s youth to discover their own roles in the new stage of the revolution and share their intellect and abilities with their homeland to build a better future for Vietnam.

The traditional reunion is over but raised many issues for all of us to consider, particularly concerning the future role of today’s youth.

*“After 42 years, it is wonderful that we can still meet, but time is running out,” Distinguished Teacher Le Cong Co confessed. “Each of us takes part in the reunion with different feelings. As Vietnamese, we*

*should understand how thousands of generations have brought sacrifices so that we and our nation can still be there. In all of us, even in the young, there is patriotism and pride. We only need live beautiful and simple lives, not removed from the lives of the people, and unafraid of barriers, because barriers arise due to barriers in our hearts. Let them come naturally with living optimism and generously dedicate their values to life. The 'beautiful life' of our Movement will certainly leave a beautiful impression on today's young forever. And that is why, when the young think back to the heroic past of great deeds, losses and the sacrifices of those who went before, it will illuminate their present, show them clearly the values of independence, freedom, solidarity and the continuing effort and struggle required to build an ever more civilized, rich and beautiful nation."*

*(Media Center)*