



# NEWS RELEASE

1221-A Brass Mill Road 21017 • HCPLonline.org  
410-273-5600, 410-575-6761 • Fax: 410-273-5606

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Janine M. Lis  
Harford County Public Library  
(o) 410 273 5600 x2256 (m) 443 252 0623  
lis@hcplonline.org  
HCPLonline.org

### **WAYNE KARLIN TO DISCUSS HIS BOOK WANDERING SOULS: Journeys with the Dead and the Living in Viet Nam**

**(Belcamp, Maryland – May 19, 2015)** On May 26th at 6:30pm, the Bel Air Library will host nationally recognized author and Vietnam Marine veteran Wayne Karlin, who will talk about finding peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness in relation to the Vietnam War. In the Vietnamese belief, the spirits of those killed far from home, through violence or accident or war, wander the earth aimlessly unless the remains or objects owned by deceased can be placed on the family alter. Without the remains, or at least some object that belong to dead, the family will never find peace. Wayne Karlin's book *Wandering Souls*, highlights this belief and a veteran's search for peace.

*Wandering Souls* tells the story of the lives of First Lieutenant Homer Steedly, Jr. and Sergeant-medic Hoang Ngoc Dam, which became inextricably bound together when they met accidentally on a jungle path in Viet Nam and Homer shot and killed Dam. Nearly forty years later, Homer returned to Viet Nam to ask Dam's family for forgiveness, and to help them return Dam's remains to his home village. "The Hoang family today," writes Karlin, "is certain that there was and is a spiritual connection between Dam and Homer."

Karlin explores the parallels in the two men's lives and the circumstances that led to their fatal meeting and the reconciliation and forgiveness that took place decades later. It is also the story of the mercy of a family, and an entire village, who took

that soldier to their hearts and allowed their gratitude at the ending he brought to their story to outweigh their need to hate him for the death that began it. "What stayed in my mind," Karlin concludes, "is the [Hoang] family's compassion to Homer, and their need to dig up the past in order to rebury it properly, with wisdom and compassion and proper commemoration."

Wayne Karlin served in the Marine Corps in Viet Nam. He is the author of numerous books of fiction and nonfiction. His articles, essays, and book reviews have appeared in, among other publications, the Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Baltimore Sun, and The Nation. He has been awarded the Paterson Prize in Fiction, an Excellence in the Arts Award from the Vietnam Veterans of America, three individual artist awards in fiction from the State of Maryland, and two Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information please visit [hcplonline.org](http://hcplonline.org) or call the Bel Air Library at 410 638 3151.

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