NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ronal Bassham

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Ronal Bassham left Emerson High School in 1953 at the age of 17 to enlist in the United States Air Force. He bravely served in Vietnam from 1971 to 1972, and for his outstanding courage and sacrifice at Quang Tri, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the U.S. Vietnam Service Medal. Mr. Bassham retired in 1975 after 22 years of honorable service to his country.

Following his retirement from the Air Force, Mr. Bassham began a new career with Harrison Radiator in 1977, and in that same year, helped create the first successful veterans committee in the history of the United Auto Workers Union. In 1995, with the goal of providing opportunities for younger workers, Mr. Bassham retired from Harrison Radiator. Since his retirement he has continued to be a community and union activist, and during the 1990s, helped write the Living Wage Law for the City of Buffalo. This law has impacted the lives of thousands of citizens living and working in the City of Buffalo. During this time, Mr. Bassham also worked with Vietnam Veterans Chapter 681, and was instrumental in opening the first Residential Post Traumatic Stress Clinic in Western New York.

In May 2002, Mr. Bassham had a significant leadership role in the Day of Honoring Event. At last, minority veterans received their long overdue decorations, and in 2006, Mr. Bassham was appointed by the federal government to be the Veterans Administration Volunteer Services Representative for Western New York.

Mr. Bassham is a member of at least 35 community groups. One of his favorites is the Niagara Military Affairs Council (NMAC). In 2006, Mr. Bassham worked to open the Women's Residential Clinic, located in Batavia, New York. This clinic provides support for female veterans suffering from PTSD. He has also worked to establish the Women's Military Support Network of Western New York, which aims to assist women at the Batavia and Buffalo veterans hospitals.