



Society, October 22, 2010, says, “We get a lot of blessing from America and it is time for us to pay back.”

Thu Anh Tran and family eventually moved to St. Louis Park, where he industriously worked hard at the Spectrum Plastic Group in St. Louis Park.

He was a generous husband, father, grandfather, and friend, willing to make any sacrifice to help friends and family. Thu Anh Tran also had a passion for fishing.

Thu Anh Tran died about two months after his wife died. He died on December 27, 2011, and was buried at Gethsemane Cemetery in New Hope, Minnesota.



SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY
2109 Boulder Pointe, Shakopee, MN 55379

952-693-3865

shakopeeheritage.org



**SHAKOPEE
HERITAGE SOCIETY**



Thu Anh Tran
1944 - 2011
In Shakopee in 1975



Thu Anh Trun was born in 1944 in Vietnam. He was a poultry farmer, owning 700 chickens according to an article in the **Shakopee Valley News** on September 10, 1975. His wife was Vu Thi Hieu.

Thu Anh Trun served eight years in the Vietnamese Army, was a sergeant in the Agitate General's staff and an interpreter for the United State Army. He holds a citation from the U.S. Military Assistance Command and in 1971 received the U.S. Army Commendation Medal. He was wounded in combat three times.

Along with his wife, Vu Thi Hieu, his mother-in-law, and their three children, Tran Hoy Cuong, age 4, Trun Trung Hau, age 3, and a girl, Tran Thi Anh Tuyet, who was a year old, immigrated to Shakopee in order to escape the communist rule in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) in Vietnam after the war was over and reunifying Vietnam under one communist regime in 1975.

Có chí thì nên is a Vietnamese saying that means, "Where there is will, there is a way." This describes the determination Vietnamese immigrants displayed in their exploration of new homelands after the Fall of Saigon, according the article *Có Chí Thì Nên: Vietnamese Immigrants Explore a New Home in Minnesota After the Fall of Saigon* from the



TRAN ANH THU FAMILY

the **International Journal of Naval History**, Volume 13, Issue 2, August 2016.

On April 30, 1975, after 20 years of fighting, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong took over Saigon, ending the war and reunifying Vietnam under one communist regime. Many South Vietnamese experienced risky journeys in order to explore new homelands and be free of communism.

Because of his service, Thu and his family was part if the group that immigrated to Shakopee. With help from parishioners of St. Mary's Catholic Church and the Anderson family, Thu Anh Trun and Vu Thi Hieu, along with their family, arrived here. Vu Thi Hieu was pregnant, and in a few months John Tran was born at St. Francis Hospital in Shakopee on November 6, 1975. Two other children also were born in Shakopee.



U.S. Vice President Walter Mondale delivers his address to the Indochinese refugee conference of the United Nations in the Palais de Nations in Geneva on Saturday, July 31, 1979. Comparing the plight of Indochina refugees to the "doomed Jews of Nazi Germany," Mondale pledged increased U.S. aid for the refugees and called on Vietnam to halt its "forced expulsions" of the boat people. AP Photo/File



Parishioners from St. Mary's Church welcomes the family from Vietnam. On left is a picture of the family from the St. Mary's booklet.

Minnesota had little racial or ethnic diversity until the mid 1970s. The South Vietnamese immigrants who fled after Fall of Saigon were the first to bring significant racial and ethnic diversity to the state, but since the late 1990s, Hmong, Somali, Indian, and Mexican immigrants have added to Minnesota's newfound melting pot, according to Lisalan Thai from the **Vietnamese Community Oral History Project** from the Minnesota Historical Society on December 22, 2010.

By the late 1980s, there were over 231,000 Vietnamese immigrants living in the U.S., with approximately 18,000 settling in Minnesota. The influx of refugees resulted in cultural exchanges as immigrants accepted Western ways of life, while trying to hold onto their Vietnamese heritage. At the same time, Minnesotans began to slowly embrace aspects of Vietnamese culture. These cultural exchanges between Minnesotans and Vietnamese immigrants helped pave the way for the immigrant groups of today.

The immigration of Vietnamese people has led to cultural exchange in Minnesota. Today more than 26,000 Vietnamese call Minnesota home. Many immigrants now own shops, businesses, and restaurants that contribute to the economy. Phuoc Tran in an **Oral History Project from the Minnesota Historical**