

PREFACE

The USC Upstate First-Year Reading & Writing Experience

Legends, Lessons, and Legacies of the Sixties: Exploring *In Country* by Bobbie Ann Mason

As you enter USC Upstate this fall, you'll be a part of a special reading, writing, and discussion experience. In every English 101 class, first-year students will read *In Country* by Bobbie Ann Mason.

In Country is the story of Samantha Hughes and her quest to confront her past and the legacy of the 1960's in her life. During the summer before she begins college, Sam makes a trip to the newly dedicated Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. She is on a journey to understand her father, who was killed in Vietnam before she was born, as well as to discover who she is. Sam's need to deal with the controversies of war and its impact on soldiers, the families they leave behind, and the country they serve makes *In Country* a meaningful book for today.

It is an especially appropriate study this fall as USC Upstate celebrates its 40th Anniversary and its founding in the 1967–68 school year. Events in the PREFACE series will help us make connections between life in the 60's—the music and fashion, the social movements, the war—and our lives today.

The PREFACE series includes a campus visit by author Bobbie Ann Mason in October as well as events like

- A 60's variety show featuring USC Upstate faculty and staff
- Hippie Halloween
- "The 60's : When the Music Mattered," a rock and roll history of the decade
- A series of award-winning films of the decade
- Then and Now panel discussions on the war, the women's movement, and civil rights
- "The Wall that Heals," the traveling exhibit of the replica of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial
- A student-led conference
- A commemoration of peace ceremony

The intent of this series of programs is to help USC Upstate first-year students make connections to each other and to the University, to practice the skills that contribute to success in college, and to discuss how a deeper understanding of events can inform the way we make personal decisions and influence public policy today.

As we come together to read, discuss, and write about *In Country*, we hope to begin a conversation that will last far beyond your studies at USC Upstate.

