

PULSE
OF THE FOOD MOVEMENT

**"Because our Fathers Lied" -
A Look at Craig McNamara's Memoir**

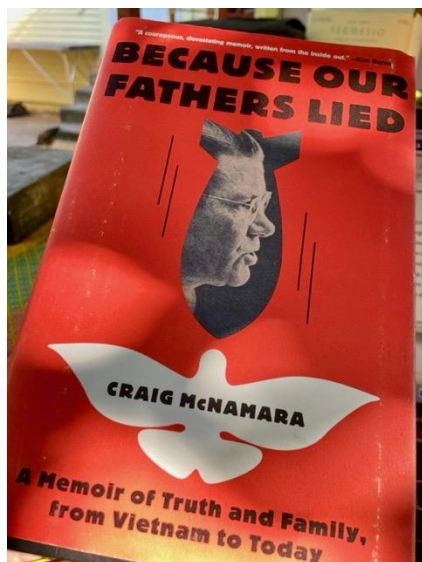
Greetings!

With this Pulse we introduce a new format, a letter with more focus than in the past. Rather than skim through many items, we go deeper on a theme and provide links to webpages that contain updates on projects. This month and next we focus on leadership, grass tops and grassroots.



Today is grass tops and is about **Craig McNamara and his new memoir, Because Our Fathers Lied**.

Craig is a leader very different from his father Robert S. McNamara who served as US Secretary of Defense for both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Secretary McNamara was the primary architect of the Vietnam War and later president of the World Bank where he financed the Green Revolution.



His father employed “hard power” that uses coercion, financial leverage and often violence to achieve ends. Craig wields “soft power” that relies on relationship and trust building to appeal to others and attract support. We know this about Craig because before Governor Brown appointed him president of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture, he sat on the Roots of Change Board for several years. Craig’s incredible life journey has taken him from events in the White House, to intense antiwar protests in the Bay Area to Easter Island, the most remote island on earth. After years working the land in several Latin American nations, he returned to the US to

study plant and soil science at UC Davis. He later founded Sierra Orchards, a diversified 450-acre regenerative farm producing walnuts, eggs and lamb. Craig models how building soil, protecting riparian habitat and diversifying plants and animals reconnects agriculture to nature. As part of his mission to help heal wounds left from the war and his own conflict with his father, Craig travelled to Vietnam in 2017. That trip created meaningful relationships with an array of Vietnamese people, which (along with completing his book) have brought Craig a peace he deserves.

Over the years Craig and I developed a close friendship based on long conversations about American history, politics, the lessons of life and our shared work. You can hear our most recent conversation, which is about his book, by hitting one of the links below.

Flipping the Table Podcast, Season 4, Episode 7: Regenerative Farmer Craig McNamara, Son of Robert S McNamara, Architect of the Vietnam War



Craig provided the context for important moments that shaped me and the organization.

In addition to board meetings, Craig hosted ROC Fellows Program retreats. We are proud that many leaders emerged from that program including USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt. His farm was also the place where four inspiring Latinas (including Alegria De La Cruz and Mily Treviño-Sauceda) first challenged ROC to focus on addressing the divides of race and privilege.

Craig's kids Sean and Emily are now business partners. Their focus is to ensure Sierra Orchards survives climate change and its dramatic disruptions, particularly drought. I believe Sean and Emily will continue the legacy of soft power leadership that ensures California Agriculture achieves its highest value as the foundation of an abundant, healthy, resilient and just future for all Californians.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Dimock
Executive Director

For updates on the array of ROC projects, hit links below:

- [Current Projects](#)
- [2022 Policy Work](#)
- [Flipping the Table Podcasts](#)

Please support our work by hitting [this link](#).

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 **Roots of Change**

