### Feb. 21, 2019

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**New WPT Education Resource Explores Life of Hmong-American Community Leader**

Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) Education has released a new *Wisconsin Biographies* story titled *Joe Bee Xiong: War to Peace. Wisconsin Biographies* is a collection of free educational, online media resources that uses the stories of famous Wisconsinites to enrich grade school social studies and literacy curriculum. *Joe Bee Xiong: War to Peace* is available online at [WPTeducation.org](https://wpteducation.org/biographies/xiong.html).

Created as an additional, student-focused, chapter to the *Wisconsin Hometown Stories: Eau Claire* series, this new *Wisconsin Biographies* story explores the life of Joe Bee Xiong, the first Hmong American to be elected to public office in Wisconsin.

“In September 2017, we surveyed educators from the Eau Claire Area School District and learned that there was a need for more digital learning resources that helped students learn about the Hmong,” said WPT Education Producer Becky Marburger. “During our collaboration with Eau Claire and state educators, historians and Hmong culture experts, Joe Bee Xiong’s name was regularly brought up as someone whom we should feature in the *Wisconsin Biographies’* story.”

Born in Laos, Xiong spent a portion of his childhood as a child soldier, blocking North Vietnamese supply lines and helping rescue downed U.S. pilots during the Vietnam War era. Following a period as a refugee, he moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, in 1980.

In Wisconsin, Xiong dedicated his life to public service. He served as a police officer for the City of Eau Claire, was elected to the community’s city council in 1996 and served as the executive director of the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association. Through his work, he helped Hmong families better their lives and taught Wisconsinites about Hmong culture.

The collaborative nature of *Joe Bee Xiong: War to Peace* was central to its development. With assistance from Wisconsin state educators and students, the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Association, the Chippewa Valley Museum and others, WPT Education has helped share Xiong’s story.

“The *Wisconsin Biographies* story of Joe Bee Xiong provides a much-needed perspective for today’s students of what life was like for Xiong and the first-generation Hmong refugees,” said Mike Peplinski, a 4th grade teacher at Locust Lane Elementary School in Eau Claire.  “The students were so wrapped up in the content. It was a great experience watching them learn about Xiong’s life.”

Using the *Wisconsin Biographies* interactive online resource, students in grades 3-8 can explore Xiong's story using a short animation piece, biographies written at three reading levels, two interactive activities, as well as an image gallery and additional resource lists. The animation and biographies are available in both English and Hmong.

The *Wisconsin Biographies* story, *Joe Bee Xiong: War to Peace* was made possible by generous funding from Pablo Properties, Dick Cable Family, Ruder Ware, Holiday Vacations, John E. Kuenzl Foundation, Theda and Tamblin Clark Smith Family Foundation, Mark and Emily Blaskey in memory of Cheri Uelmen, Mel and Leann Breed, Sam and Suzy Murty, Trust Point, Presto Foundation, Royal Credit Union, Anonymous, The Eau Claire Community Foundation, including support from the Scobie Family Fund, the Daniel and Mary Ann Ogan Educational Fund and the Daniel F and Margaret J. Brown Fund, Friends of Wisconsin Public Television and the Wisconsin History Fund, supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

WPT is a service of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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