

**CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS**

OF SERVICE TO VETERANS—OUR NATION'S DEFENDERS

**2017  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



**The Veterans  
Consortium**

PRO BONO PROGRAM®

# WE BELIEVE

THAT OUR VETERANS  
~OUR NATION'S DEFENDERS~  
DESERVE THE CARE, BENEFITS,  
AND COMPENSATION THEY WERE  
PROMISED, AND THE BEST LEGAL  
SERVICES FREE OF CHARGE TO  
MEET THEIR CHALLENGES.

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# KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

## THE HONORABLE BRIAN MAST

### SILVER ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND AWARDS BANQUET

We were honored to have Congressman Brian Mast as our Keynote speaker for the Silver Anniversary Dinner and Awards Banquet. It's a privilege to count him as a supporter of The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. Congressman Brian Mast represents the 18th Congressional District of Florida.

**P**rior to his election to Congress, Brian followed in his father's footsteps by serving in the U.S. Army for more than 12 years, earning the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal for Valor, the Purple Heart Medal, and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. While deployed in Afghanistan, he worked as a bomb disposal expert under the elite Joint Special Operations Command. The last improvised explosive device he found resulted in catastrophic injuries, including the loss of both legs.

While lying in bed recovering at Walter Reed Medical Center, Brian's father gave him advice that has stuck with him to this day—to ensure the greatest service he gave to our country and the best example he set for his children was still ahead of him. Brian took this advice to heart and dedicated himself to finding new ways to serve our country and his community.

Brian remained on active duty following the injuries and provided expertise to the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms during his recovery process. After his retirement from the Army, he

continued working in counter-terrorism and national defense as an Explosive Specialist with the Department of Homeland Security. Brian subsequently received a degree from the Harvard Extension School and volunteered to serve alongside the Israel Defense Forces to show support for the freedom Israel represents throughout the Middle East and the world.

"I want to thank The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program for playing a role in the lives of my peers, my brothers and sisters. Those that were willing to go out there and lay it all on the line. They've come from the battlefields of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. They are united by the fact that their sense of duty is to the United States of America above all else — there is nothing more important to them. I can't say thank you enough to TVC for being out there to support them".

—Congressman Brian Mast



“I want to thank The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program for playing a role in the lives of my peers, my brothers and sisters. Those that were willing to go out there and lay it all on the line.... I can't say thank you enough to TVC for being there to support them.”



# HART T. MANKIN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM RECEIVES  
HART T. MANKIN AWARD 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

“The Veterans Pro Bono Consortium is a model program indeed and has been so for the quarter-century it has been in existence. The program and its success are the work of many talented and dedicated individuals, and in recognition of their above-and-beyond effort, it gives me great pleasure to present The Veterans Pro Bono Consortium with the Hart T. Mankin Distinguished Service Award.”

– Chief Judge Robert N. Davis





# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

**W**hat a year! We had so much to celebrate and so many people to thank for the successes of the last twenty-five years. This milestone year afforded us the opportunity to reflect on our history and to recognize the significant contributions of the Pioneers of the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program (the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and Legal Services Corporation), and the Founders of The Veterans Consortium (TVC) (our founding chairman from Covington & Burling and founding directors from Disabled American Veterans, The American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and National Veterans Legal Services Program). We also created opportunities to recognize the invaluable commitment of our TVC National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup> and our Mission Partners who have joined forces with our dedicated staff to accomplish our shared mission. Another highlight of 2017 was the honor of accepting the Hart T. Mankin Distinguished Service Award on behalf of The Veterans Consortium from Judge Robert N. Davis, Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (see page 4).

Please take the time to read our case story about Shirley Sutfin, widow of WWII Battle of the Bulge veteran Charles Sutfin. She will soon be receiving retroactive benefits of about \$195,000 and a monthly payment of \$1,233 going forward. Leo Dombrowski, a member

of our TVC National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup>, received the case from TVC and represented Mrs. Sutfin in her appeal. Thankfully her 14-year fight for justice is finally over. Clearly, the need is great and we look forward to expanding our program and providing access to justice to more veterans.

As we come to an end of this milestone year, I want to salute you—our volunteers, our Mission Partners, and our supporters. Thank you to all who have been a part of our success over these past 25 years. Please consider the ways we can collaborate as we set the course for the next 25 years. Together, we must continue to help our nation honor our commitments to the Veterans we serve, provide them equal access to justice, and secure what they were promised when they took an oath to defend our country. Together, we must unite to advance our shared mission by meeting Veterans' current and emerging needs, increasing our outreach, and developing ways to further support our volunteers. Together, we will succeed.

Sincerely,



**Mary Ann Gilleece, Esq.**  
*Chairman of the Executive Board*



“Together, we must continue to help our nation honor our commitments to the Veterans we serve.... Together, we must unite.... Together, we will succeed.”



**THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM**  
PRO BONO PROGRAM® 1992 2017



★ **Handled**  
**>45,000** legal requests  
from veterans and their loved ones



★ **82%** lifetime  
**success rate** for federal cases



★ **Recruited, trained, and mentored**  
**4,038** attorneys  
across the U.S.



★ **Value** of donated  
attorney services  
**>\$100M**

★ **Operates a national**  
**helpline**  
that provides  
valuable legal information



[www.vetsprobono.org](http://www.vetsprobono.org)  
@vetsprobono #theyfoughtforus





# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I want to thank the members of our Executive Board, our highly skilled staff and our Mission Partners—for 25 years of excellent service to our veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. What a privilege it was to be part of the 25th anniversary year of this highly successful program and to celebrate our collective accomplishments while looking to the future of our mission.

Our Chairman's luncheon in the spring was the first of the two key events we hosted to celebrate this milestone year, held on 25 April at Ft. Lesley J. McNair. Over 60 distinguished guests gathered in the beautiful ballroom overlooking the Potomac and Anacostia rivers to celebrate TVC's Silver Anniversary milestone and honor the Pioneers of the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program as well as the Founders of The Veterans Consortium. In the fall, we held our Silver Anniversary Dinner and Awards Banquet at Union Station in Washington, D.C., on 4 October. This memorable event, held in the historic East Hall, celebrated **25 years of pro bono legal service** to veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors in front of a crowd of hundreds of veterans, volunteers from across the nation, members of Congress and the Executive and Judicial Branches, senior representatives of Congressionally-chartered Veterans Service Organizations, and community supporters.

Over the past 25 years, our TVC National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup>, Mission Partners,

and dedicated staff have handled nearly **50,000** Veterans' requests for legal assistance, trained **over 4,000** attorneys from law firms and corporate legal departments, helped law schools establish programs or legal clinics to build the veterans law bar, and **succeeded in 82%** of our federal Court cases. These achievements translate into **over \$100 million** in pro bono legal services provided on behalf of Veterans in need, and by our calculations, more than three times that in the lifetime value of care, benefits, and disability compensation that have changed our clients' lives.

Thank you to our TVC National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup> members who have successfully represented Veterans from all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. Territories (plus many countries where U.S. Veterans live abroad). As the leading national charitable organization providing pro bono legal services for Veterans in federal courts, our volunteers come from organizations as diverse as large corporate legal departments to small academic veterans law clinics, from a majority of the Am Law 200 firms to

newly-minted solo practitioners. As varied as these backgrounds may be, they each joined forces as part of The Veterans Consortium because **we all share a passion** to provide equal access to justice for our Veterans before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the Federal Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

While these remarkable accomplishments are truly worthy of celebration, **we have so much more to do**. We want to expand our pro bono Medical Review Program, build out our TVC Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> for cases involving PTSD and TBI, and grow the TVC Legal Scholars Program<sup>SM</sup>. We will continue to deliver equal access to justice for our veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors. On behalf of these men and women—our nation's defenders—and their loved ones, thank you for your support of our mission.



**Edmund M. Glabus**  
Executive Director





# *Congratulations*

## *The Veterans Consortium*

### *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

October 4, 2017

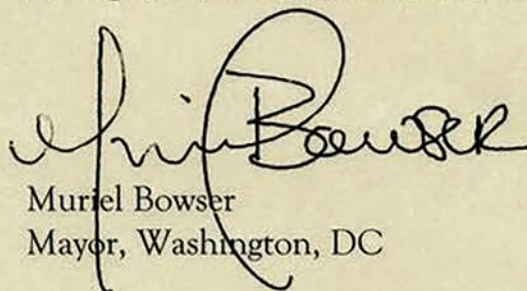
WHEREAS, since 1992, The Veterans Consortium has provided free legal services through its Pro Bono program to assist our veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors; and

WHEREAS, our veterans deserve the very best legal representation to meet their challenges; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Consortium in conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, has processed more than 1,600 requests for legal service and legal information from veterans throughout this city; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, The Veterans Consortium launched five Pop Up Legal Clinics and in 2017, transitioned these clinics to the Veterans Pro Bono Legal Clinic which operates at the District of Columbia Medical Center:

NOW, THEREFORE, I THE MAYOR OF WASHINGTON, DC, do hereby congratulate The Veterans Consortium for its Pro Bono program and for providing 25 years of legal assistance to help meet the needs of the veterans throughout our city.



Muriel Bowser  
Mayor, Washington, DC





# CONGRESSIONAL RECORD HONORS

**E1310** **CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extension**

After his time in private practice he became a Court Commissioner for the Fremont-Newark-Union City Municipal Court for seven years. In 1997, he was appointed Judge of the Municipal Court by Governor Pete Wilson. Keith was the first Asian American judge to serve on the Fremont-Newark-Union City Municipal Court.

Following his appointment, he was elected judge of the Superior Court of California. During his time as a Superior Court judge he has handled a variety of assignments, including criminal trials and arraignments.

Throughout his life, Keith has actively served his community outside of the court.

**HONORING ARMY VETERAN CHARLES DIETRICH ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY**

**HON. CHERI BUSTOS**  
OF ILLINOIS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Tuesday, October 3, 2017*

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor decorated Army veteran Charles LeRoi Dietrich of Pekin, Illinois, on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

Mr. Dietrich was inducted into the U.S. Army on February 15, 1946 at Ft. Sheridan in Chicago.



was the President of the Hollywood Bar Association. At the age of 90, Mitchell was honored by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during ceremonies recognizing the 65th anniversary of the birth of Israel.

Mitchell is survived by his wife of 59 years, Joyce, and sons, Michael and Guy, whom I hope take comfort in the way Mitchell lived his life as a patriotic, selfless and caring Veteran who served his nation and its ally, Israel. May his memory be a blessing to us all.



## Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

### House of Representatives

HONORING  
the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
**HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ** of Florida  
in the House of Representatives

October 3, 2017

Mr. Speaker,

I rise today to recognize the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program as they celebrate 25 years of service to our veterans community.

Since 1992, the Veterans Consortium has provided over \$100 million in pro bono services working on five thousand individual cases.

As our veterans return home from military service, it is critical they receive the benefits and care they deserve and need. The tireless efforts of the Veterans Consortium representing veterans at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims is an essential aspect of our promise to support servicemembers as they transition to civilian life.

As the Ranking Member of the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, I commend the member attorneys of the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program for their generosity and unwavering commitment.

Thank you, I yield back the balance of my time.

*Debbie Wasserman Schultz*  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

#### HONORING THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM PRO BONO PROGRAM 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ**

OF FLORIDA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 3, 2017*

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program as they celebrate 25 years of service to our veterans community.

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As the Ranking Member of the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, I commend the member attorneys of the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program for their generosity and unwavering commitment.

#### HONORING RYAN DECAMP

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 3, 2017*

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Ryan DeCamp. Ryan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Ryan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Ryan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Ryan is the 350th Eagle Scout in his troop's history.



# 2017 SILVER ANNIVERSARY CHAIRMAN'S LUNCHEON

In the spring of 2017, we formally began our celebration of The Veterans Consortium's Silver Anniversary year and the concurrent 25-year milestone of the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program. Our Chairman of the Executive Board, Mary Ann Gilleece, hosted the Chairman's Luncheon on a beautiful spring day on the banks of the Potomac River in the Officers Club at Fort Lesley J. McNair. We took this opportunity to recognize the significant contributions of the Pioneers of the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program (the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and Legal Services Corporation) and those of the founders of The Veterans Consortium (our founding Chairman from Covington & Burling and the founding directors from Disabled American Veterans, The American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and National Veterans Legal Services Program).





# RECOGNITION OF PIONEERS



## On Behalf of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

*(Recipients listed Left to right)*

Gary Butter (TVC),

Founding Chief Judge Frank Q. Nebeker\*

Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC),

Current Chief Judge Robert N. Davis (CAVC),

Mary Ann Gilleece (TVC)

\* Senior Judge



## On Behalf of the United States Congress

Mary Ann Gilleece *Chairman of TVC Executive Board*

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz

*United States Congresswoman*

Gary Butter *Vice Chairman of TVC Executive Board*



## "Pioneers Group Photo"

*(Recipients listed Left to right)*

Mark Freeman *Legal Services Corporation (LSC)*, Bristow Hardin *(LSC)*,

Gary Butter *(TVC)*, Marty Costello *(LSC)*, Ed Glabus *(TVC)*, Chief Judge

Robert N. Davis *(CAVC)*, Mary Ann Gilleece *(TVC)*, Judge Lawrence B.

Hagel\* *(CAVC)*, Judge Frank Q. Nebeker\* *(CAVC)*, Judge William A.

Moorman\* *(CAVC)*, Judge Mary J. Schoelen *(CAVC)*, Judge Bruce E. Kasold\*

*(CAVC)*, Judge Margaret Bartley *(CAVC)*, Judge William P. Greene\* *(CAVC)*

\* Senior Judge



## On Behalf of Legal Services Corporation

*(Recipients listed Left to right)*

Gary Butter, Bristow Hardin *(LSC)*,

Martin Costello *(LSC)*, Mary Ann Gilleece



# MISSION PARTNER AWARDEES

## The Veterans Consortium Announces 2017 Pro Bono Mission Partner Awardees & Recognition of Honorary Co-Counsel of 5000th Federal Veterans Pro Bono Program Case

**T**he inaugural Pro Bono Mission Partner Awards were presented at our TVC Silver Anniversary Dinner and Pro Bono Awards Banquet in front of a crowd of veterans, volunteers from across the nation, members of Congress, senior representatives of the Judicial and Executive branches, national veterans service organizations, and community supporters who gathered to celebrate 25 years of pro bono legal service to veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors.

Duane Morris LLP received the 2017 TVC Law Firm Pro Bono Mission Partner Award; Google Inc. received the 2017 TVC Corporate Pro Bono Mission Partner Award, and the team of BakerHostetler and Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company received the TVC Law Firm/Corporate Pro Bono Mission Partners Award.

TVC also recognized The Honorable William H. Webster, former Director of the FBI and the CIA and current Chair of the Homeland Security Council, and Ms. Linda Klein, Immediate Past President of the American Bar Association, as the honorary co-counsel for TVC's milestone 5000th federal Veterans Pro Bono Program case with lead counsel Judy Donegan, Esq., TVC Director of Litigation & Case Management.

### TVC 2017 LAW FIRM PRO BONO MISSION PARTNER AWARD

**Duane Morris®**

**“The firm’s pro bono representation in these federal appellate cases is critical...”**

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program presented Duane Morris LLP with the 2017 TVC Law Firm Pro Bono Mission Partner Award, in recognition of their outstanding record of service provided to our nation’s veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors by their firm in 2016-17.

Duane Morris has been a valued partner in our successful core mission of providing pro bono representation to veterans at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims for years. The firm’s pro bono representation in these federal appellate cases is critical to ensuring our veterans—our

nation’s defenders—receive the care, benefits, and compensation they were promised, and the best legal services free of charge to meet their challenges. Veterans and their loved ones have repeatedly asked TVC to convey their gratitude to Duane Morris volunteers.

Duane Morris helped TVC expand outreach and access to justice for our nation’s veterans by taking services directly to them in our nation’s capital. In the fall of 2016, Duane Morris volunteer support was critical to implementation of TVC’s Pop-Up Legal Clinics at VA facilities in the D.C. Metro area. Duane Morris made a significant pro bono



**Kenneth Crawford, LTC, USA, Ret.**  
*Student, Georgetown Law Center*  
*TVC National Volunteer Corps™*



commitment to serve as the strategic partner law firm in launching this initiative by staffing legal information and referral clinics across Washington, D.C. with team members from the east coast offices for the first Annual TVC Legal Muster<sup>SM</sup> in our nation's capital. They continue to provide vital support for our weekly legal clinic at the D.C. VA Medical Center.

This commitment to pro bono service clearly demonstrates that Duane Morris has “gone above and beyond the call of duty” on behalf of our nation's defenders and is a model for other pro bono teams to emulate.

## TVC 2017 CORPORATE PRO BONO MISSION PARTNER AWARD



The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program presented Google, Inc. with the 2017 TVC Corporate Pro Bono Mission Partner Award, in recognition of an outstanding record of service provided to our nation's veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors over the past five years. Founded in 1992 and operating continuously since, The Veterans Consortium (TVC) became a freestanding charitable organization in 2012. In the ensuing five years, as TVC built its infrastructure and implemented best practices for nonprofits, Google Inc. contributed significant investments of in-kind business services and resources to support

mission infrastructure. Google Inc. pro bono attorneys enlisted in TVC's National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup> and completed the specialized training necessary to assist veterans. As a recent example, working from both coasts, Google litigators Andrew Trask of San Francisco, California, and Jim Sherwood of Washington, D.C., innovatively collaborated across time zones to jointly take and win a compelling federal appellate case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. The client has expressed deep gratitude for this pro bono representation.

As part of their support to the growth of TVC's mission infrastructure, Google contributed resources of time and talent in support of the participation by Google patent counsel and Navy veteran, Gary Butter, who currently serves in a critical leadership position on TVC's Executive Board of Directors as its Vice Chairman. This service has required commitment of talent and resources vital to the success of the board's leadership in moving TVC forward as it implements enhancements in operations, technologies, and communications with volunteers and the veterans we serve. In sum, this commitment to pro bono service, clearly demonstrates that Google has “gone above and beyond the call of duty” on behalf of our nation's defenders.

## TVC 2017 LAW FIRM/ CORPORATE PRO BONO MISSION PARTNERS AWARD

**BakerHostetler**



**Nationwide®**

*BakerHostetler LLP and Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company*

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program presented BakerHostetler LLP and Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company with the 2017 TVC Law Firm/

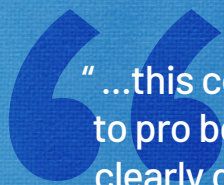
**“For the cases resolved as of TVC's Silver Anniversary event, their team had an amazing unbroken win streak for our veteran clients!”**

Corporate Pro Bono Mission Partners Award in recognition of the outstanding collaborative record of service provided to our nation's veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors by their pro bono teams.

In close collaboration, from 2016-2017 BakerHostetler and Nationwide attorneys handled more than 10% of The Veterans Consortium's annual federal appellate caseload. For the cases resolved as of TVC's Silver Anniversary event, their team had an amazing unbroken win streak for our veteran clients! TVC has received many heartfelt expressions of appreciation for this service from the veterans and their loved ones.

A deep connection to veterans' affairs spans BakerHostetler's history—from Newton Baker's service as Secretary of War under President Wilson, through the firm's history to the nearly 70 veterans currently employed by the firm. During BakerHostetler's 2016 Centennial celebration, the firm made a significant pro bono commitment to The Veterans Consortium, including critical logistical support by hosting a regional TVC CAVC attorney volunteer training for law firms and corporate counsel in the Columbus, Ohio area and via telecast for 89 attorneys from a number of organizations across the country. In total, 65 BakerHostetler attorneys attended the training, setting a record for single-firm attorney attendance in one day.

This commitment to pro bono service clearly demonstrates that the BakerHostetler/ Nationwide team has “gone above and beyond the call of duty” on behalf of our nation's defenders and is a model for other pro bono teams to emulate.



**“...this commitment to pro bono service, clearly demonstrates that Google has gone above and beyond the call of duty on behalf of our nation's defenders.”**

# MISSION PARTNER AWARDEES PHOTOS

## 2017 TVC LAW FIRM PRO BONO MISSION PARTNER AWARD

### DUANE MORRIS LLP

Accepted by Patrick McPherson  
and Valentine Brown



## 2017 TVC CORPORATE PRO BONO MISSION PARTNER AWARD

### GOOGLE INC.

Accepted by Sybil Strimbu



## 2017 TVC LAW FIRM/CORPORATE PRO BONO MISSION PARTNERS AWARD

### BAKERHOSTETLER / NATIONWIDE MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY

Accepted by Rodger Eckelberry, *BakerHostetler*, and Mark  
Howard, *Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company*



## HONORARY CO-COUNSEL FOR 5000<sup>TH</sup> CASE

The Honorable William H. Webster (Ret.), *Millbank, Tweed,  
Hadley & McCloy LLP*, Ms. Linda Klein Baker, *Donelson,  
Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz*, Mary Ann Gilleece,  
The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Gary Butter,  
and Ed Glabus





# MILESTONE 5000<sup>TH</sup> CASE

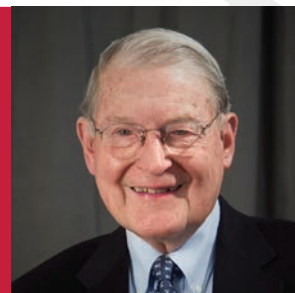
## THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM'S 5000<sup>TH</sup> APPELLATE CASE FOR THE FEDERAL VETERANS PRO BONO PROGRAM

The Veterans Consortium's 5000th appellate case for the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program coincided with TVC's Silver Anniversary year. TVC placed the case with Judge William H. Webster and Ms. Linda Klein, Esq. as pro bono Honorary Co-Counsel. Judy Donegan, Director of Litigation & Case Management, was the lead attorney on the case, which was taken on behalf of a combat-decorated Vietnam veteran. The veteran had been fighting to get the VA to award him service connected benefits to manage a medical condition that developed while serving his country. [Editor's Note: Just prior to finalizing this annual report, TVC was notified that the "dream team" below had prevailed on behalf of the veteran. Stay tuned for details in our TVC Monthly Brief newsletter and our 2018 annual report!]

### TVC'S 2017 PRO BONO "DREAM TEAM"

#### THE HONORABLE WILLIAM H. WEBSTER

Judge William H. Webster was invited to accept this honor, because of his highly distinguished career of national public service. After serving as a US naval officer, attorney and federal judge, he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to lead the FBI and then appointed by President Ronald Reagan to serve as the Director of the CIA until his retirement from public office in 1991. He currently serves as co-chairman of the Homeland Security Advisory Council. He recently retired from the Washington D.C. offices of the international law firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy.



#### MS. LINDA KLEIN, ESQ.

Ms. Linda Klein was invited to accept this honor because of her work as the President of the American Bar Association and her efforts to focus on improving access to justice and providing legal assistance to our nation's veterans. "We have learned that many veterans do not know the problem they have is a legal one," said Klein. "These are men and women who put their life on the line for our country, in defense of our liberty. When our justice system fails these people, we must answer their call and fight on their behalf." Linda Klein is a senior managing shareholder at Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz and the first woman to serve as president of the State Bar of Georgia.



#### MS. JUDY DONEGAN, ESQ.

As a seasoned veterans' attorney, Ms. Judy Donegan, Esq., TVC's Director of Litigation & Case Management, was the lead counsel for this milestone case and worked closely with Judge Webster and Ms. Klein on the federal appeal. Ms. Donegan has spent the last decade representing U.S. military veterans before the CAVC, the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. A graduate of the University of Baltimore School of Law, she was admitted to the State Bar of Michigan in 1994. Her appellate work before the CAVC began in 2007, and she became an accredited attorney for practice before the VA the following year. She has led or participated in more than 2,000 appeals before the CAVC. Judy is the granddaughter of a World War II veteran and the daughter of a Korean conflict veteran.



# SILVER ANNIVERSARY SPONSORS

## HERO SPONSOR

Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP

## FREEDOM SPONSOR

BakerHostetler LLP

Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company

## PATRIOT SPONSOR

Duane Morris LLP

The Greenberg Traurig Philanthropic Fund at The Miami Foundation

ManTech International Corporation

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

## GUARDIAN SPONSOR

Butler Weihmuller Katz Craig LLP

Disabled American Veterans

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner LLP

Marriott International Corporation

National Association of County Veterans Service Officers

National Veterans Legal Services Program

The American Legion

Mary Ann Gilleece, Esq.  
Chairman of TVC Executive Board

## HONOR GUARD SPONSOR

Buckley Sandler LLP

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Crowell & Moring LLP

Fish & Richardson PC

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP

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The Home Depot

## VETS DEFENDER SPONSOR

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Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick LTD

Goodman Allen Donnelly

Google Inc.

McCarter & English LLP

Michael Best & Friedrich LLP

Michael Hausfeld

Michael Nardotti, Esq., Major General, U.S. Army (Ret.) Senior Partner, Squire Patton Boggs

National Organization of Veterans Advocates

Saab North America

Steptoe & Johnson LLP

WSL Consulting LLC





# TVC 2017 DONORS HONOR ROLL

## WITH GRATITUDE

**Thank you to our donors whose generous support is critical to our mission.**

Much of the tremendous work reported in this annual report was made possible because of your contributions. On behalf of the veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors that we serve, thank you for caring and for your generosity.

### **\$25,000 TO \$100,000**

Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer  
Equal Justice Works

### **\$10,000 TO \$24,999**

BakerHostetler LLP  
Duane Morris LLP and Duane Morris/Christopher  
Tyson and other aggregated donations  
ManTech International Corporation  
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Therese Strobe  
William Dempster  
William Greene  
William Guarnieri  
William Hamilton  
Zoila Flores

# THE SUTFIN SAGA: A CASE STORY

## TVC NATIONAL VOLUNTEER CORPS<sup>SM</sup> SUCCEEDS AGAIN

**C**harles Sutfin, an Army Battle of the Bulge veteran who had been diagnosed with lung cancer in 2003, had filed all the necessary paperwork to receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation and pension for the lung cancer. After his death in 2004, his wife, Shirley Sutfin, re-filed for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Sometimes, a whole year would pass and Mrs. Sutfin would hear nothing. More than once, at the end of that yearlong wait, Sutfin would learn that the VA lost all of the paperwork.

Kathy Bower, a veterans service officer with the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, saved the day – **not once, but three times** over the course of 12 years when the paperwork was lost. Astutely, she had kept a copy of the 1,000-1,500 page submission. "Those days, we did not have electronic access to records," Bower recalls.

So it was fitting that, on a sunny March day, heading to her West Frankfort, Ill., home after a doctor's appointment, Sutfin's phone rang. It was Bower, **who had been there from the beginning**, proclaiming the glorious words: "It went through." The VA had finally granted her the compensation she was seeking.

Thankfully, Sutfin's daughter, Debra, was driving that day. Her black Nissan rolled north along I-24 and Sutfin recalls: "I was shocked." They were about an hour from home and Sutfin could barely wait to call her pro bono attorney from The Veterans Consortium, Leo Dombrowski, who hadn't received word from the VA Regional Office yet.

Dombrowski took the case on appeal through the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program in April 2016 **after it had already spent a dozen years** shuffling through the VA system. Dombrowski was determined to put an end to that.

Dombrowski immediately reframed the case to look at whether the Board of Veterans' Appeals misapplied the law when it failed to properly apply the benefit of the doubt rule regarding service connection, failed to satisfy its duty to assist and failed to ensure compliance with its remand orders regarding missing records. In addition, Dombrowski asked if the Board provided adequate basis for denial, especially when relying on inadequate medical evidence and rejecting favorable evidence.

**The Sutfin saga**, as Dombrowski calls it, began in March of 1944. Charles Sutfin had been on active duty in the Army since March of 1942, seeing

action in Europe during World War II. He was recovering from back surgery when he felt a soreness in his chest. It was described as a "focal pneumonitis with liquefaction necrosis and abscess formation," but Bower says today it would be described as a nosocomial infection (a hospital-acquired infection). X-rays showed a right lung abscess. He spent eight months in the hospital and although he was given permission to remain stateside after his recovery, he chose to travel back to his platoon and resume his position as a tank repairman for the Battle of the Bulge. His separation exam, in December 1945, noted the lung abscess as a significant condition incurred during his Army service. In December 2002, Charles, known as Herm, was prepping for another back surgery when a chest CT scan and chest x-ray revealed a right-sided lung mass. In March 2003, his pulmonologist diagnosed him with lung cancer, that mostly likely was a scar cancer developed in the area of the old scar.

To those involved, it seemed clear on paper that Sutfin's lung cancer was a result of the post-surgery infection he suffered while in the service. **The VA just didn't see it that way.** Peppered amidst the yearlong silences and lost files, were denials, remands and requests for more reports from doctors.

After the original DIC filing in 2004, the VA Regional Office denied the claim, ruling that because the files lacked an x-ray showing scar tissue before Sutfin left the Army, there was no confirmation that he had scar tissue in his right lung. Mrs. Sutfin appealed this decision, but the files were lost. It was a **full four years** before the VA took any material action in the case, Dombrowski says.



ABOVE:  
Leo Dombrowski, Esq.  
TVC National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup>





In 2012, the case was remanded to the VA Regional Office, mostly for more medical records. The documents Sutfin submitted included medical treatise evidence supporting a link between an abscess leading to scar tissue and ultimately to cancer. In July, the VA Regional Office obtained a Compensation and Pension (C&P) opinion from a VA-provided medical professional, who opined that the lung cancer was most likely related to cigarette use, when evidence clearly showed that Sutfin had never smoked. Still, the **VA Regional Office continued to deny benefits.**

“There are so many cases that go through the system and this one appears to involve sheer incompetence, negligence or uncaring,” Dombrowski says. “The message is, if you think you have a valid claim, stick with it. In defense of the VA, they get tens of thousands of claims” [appealed each year].

After reviewing the lengthy record, Dombrowski thought there was clear error and **grounds for a remand.** The VA initially remained adamant that remand was not warranted. However, after Dombrowski filed the appellant’s opening brief, the VA thought differently and agreed to a joint remand. Given the wording of the parties’ motion for remand on the benefit of the doubt issue, Dombrowski believes, “It tied the VA’s hands and they basically had to rule in our favor.”

Dombrowski immediately reported back to TVC about the victory, writing in an email: “I am extremely happy to report—tickled, actually—that Shirley Sutfin, widow of WWII veteran Charles Sutfin, will soon be receiving retroactive benefits of about \$195,000 and a monthly payment of \$1,233 going forward.... Finally, her 14-year case is happily over. It would have been nice if she had been receiving monthly payments for some time now, but even at 83, she sounds like she still has many miles to go.”

“This case is important because a veteran’s wife kept with it.... It’s important and satisfying to stay with the veteran and provide guidance toward the end goal.”

As a dedicated member of TVC’s National Volunteer Corps™, Dombrowski has now handled and won ten appeals through the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program and always continues to represent the veteran free of charge after the Court appeal and remand. “This case is important because a veteran’s wife kept with it. She didn’t give up and is happy that she was eventually referred to The Veterans Consortium,” he says. **“It’s important and satisfying to stay with the veteran and provide guidance toward the end goal.”**

# NEW JUDGES WELCOMED

## NEW JUDGES NAMED TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

On 3 August 2017, Michael P. Allen, Amanda L. Meredith, and Joseph L. Toth, were confirmed by the full U.S. Senate as judges for the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). They join five other Active CAVC Judges on the Court: Chief Judge Robert N. Davis, Judge Mary J. Schoelen, Judge Coral W. Pietsch, Judge Margaret Bartley and Judge William S. Greenberg.

*\*As of the publication of this Annual Report, Judge Joseph L. Falvey, Jr. has joined the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.*

### JUDGE MICHAEL P. ALLEN



Judge Michael Allen was nominated by the President of the United States in June 2017. He was con-

firmed by the United States Senate, and appointed a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in August 2017. United States District Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich of the Middle District of Florida administered the judicial oath to Judge Allen on August 11, 2017.

For 16 years before his judicial appointment, Judge Allen was a tenured full professor of law at Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida. He was also the director of Stetson's Veterans Law Institute, and he spent four years as the College of Law's associate dean. Judge Allen also served as a visiting professor of law at the University of Illinois College of

Law. Before entering teaching, Judge Allen practiced law for nine years in the litigation department of the Boston-based international law firm Ropes & Gray.

Judge Allen graduated summa cum laude from the University of Rochester earning bachelor's degrees in American history and political science. He received his juris doctor from Columbia Law School, where he was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar during his final two years.

As a professor, Judge Allen taught courses in constitutional law, civil procedure, federal courts, remedies, and veterans benefits law. He has been a prolific author, cowriting two books and more than 25 articles and essays. Judge Allen also received numerous awards for his scholarship and teaching including the Stetson University Award for Excellence in Scholarship, the

Brown-Dickerson Award for Excellence in Scholarship, the Stetson University Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Stetson University Award for Excellence in Professionalism and Career Development. He also received the Stetson's Golden Apple Award for teaching and was twice named the best all-around professor.

Before taking the bench, Judge Allen was active in professional associations. He served on the Board of Trustees of the Southeastern Association of Law Schools and was the Chair of the American Association of Law Schools' sections on Remedies and New Law Teachers. He is also active in his synagogue where, along with his wife, he received the Shofar Award for community service.

Judge Allen is married to Debra Brown Allen and has two sons, Ben and Noah.



## JUDGE AMANDA L. MEREDITH



Judge Amanda L. Meredith was nominated by the President of the United States in June 2017. She subsequently was confirmed by the United States Senate and appointed a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in August 2017.

For more than 12 years prior to her appointment, Judge Meredith worked for the Republican staff of the United States Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Most recently,

she served from 2015 to 2017 as the Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel for Chairman Johnny Isakson. She served as General Counsel from 2008 to 2015 and as Benefits Counsel from 2005 to 2008 under Ranking Member Richard Burr and Chairman/ Ranking Member Larry Craig. During this time, she was responsible for legislative and oversight activities regarding a wide range of veterans' issues and assisted Members of Congress in enacting numerous laws to help improve the benefits and services for our nation's veterans.

Prior to joining the staff of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Judge Meredith worked for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims for more than seven years. While at the Court, she served from 2004 to 2005

as the Director of the Court's Task Force for Backlog Reduction, a team of experienced attorneys dedicated to reducing the inventory of pending appeals. From 2000 to 2004, she was the Executive Attorney to Chief Judge Kenneth Kramer, serving as the principal legal advisor to the Chief Judge regarding all judicial functions; supervising the chambers law clerks; and managing the chambers caseload. She served from 1997 to 2000 as a judicial law clerk to Judge Kramer.

Judge Meredith graduated summa cum laude from the University at Buffalo with a bachelor of science degree in accounting and graduated magna cum laude from the University at Buffalo Law School, where she was a member of the Buffalo Law Review.

## JUDGE JOSEPH L. TOTH



Judge Joseph L. Toth was nominated by the President of the United States in June 2017. He was subsequently confirmed by the United States Senate and was appointed a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims in August 2017.

Judge Toth is a veteran of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps of the United States Navy, where he served as Senior Defense Counsel in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and provided legal assistance to veterans, service members, and their families. In 2011, Judge Toth was deployed to the Zhari district of Afghanistan where he served as a Field Officer for the Rule of Law Field Force Afghanistan (ROLFF-A) and was stationed with the Army's 10th Mountain

Division. He received the Joint Service Commendation Medal for his service in Afghanistan.

After leaving active duty, Judge Toth served as Associate Federal Defender in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with a focus on appellate litigation and motions practice. Judge Toth has served on or appeared before several federal and military courts, including the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Judge Toth clerked for Judge Daniel A. Manion of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and Judge Robert J. Conrad of the United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina. Additionally, he worked as an Associate Counsel at Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP in the commercial litigation group.

Judge Toth received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Chicago and his juris doctor from the Ave Maria School of Law, where he was the managing editor of the Ave Maria Law Review.

# TVC DISCHARGE UPGRADE PROGRAM<sup>SM</sup>



**"I would like to thank AT&T and Akin Gump for the opportunity to expand TVC's Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup>. I am excited to work with both organizations to support our veterans by providing pro bono legal representation for discharge upgrade applications."**

**—Danica Gonzalves**  
Equal Justice Works Fellow,  
Sponsored by AT&T and Akin  
Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

**T**he Veterans Consortium (TVC) Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> provides nationwide pro bono legal representation to veterans with Other Than Honorable Discharges due to conduct related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and other behavioral health issues. We believe that PTSD, TBI and other behavioral health issues resulting from military service should not preclude veterans from receiving the benefits and respect they deserve. We began building our TVC Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> in early 2016 to meet the growing need in the veteran community for assistance with discharge upgrade applications to secure benefits eligibility for veterans and to restore dignity to our nation's warriors.

## TVC DISCHARGE UPGRADE PROGRAM<sup>SM</sup> GROWS WITH 2017 EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS FELLOWSHIP

Our TVC Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> was expanded significantly in 2017 when we were awarded a two-year Equal Justice Works Fellowship sponsored by our Mission Partners, AT&T and Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP. Because of their generous support, TVC's capacity to serve veterans has grown to nearly 1,000 annual requests from men and women with Other Than Honorable discharges due to conduct related to PTSD, TBI and other behavioral health issues.

**Akin Gump**  
STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP



"AT&T is a committed supporter of our nation's veterans, planning to hire 20,000 by 2020," said **David McAtee**, AT&T's Senior Executive Vice President and General Counsel.

"Working with The Veterans Consortium is one more way we can help those who served to productively re-acclimate into civilian life. Our lawyers are eager to lend their time and expertise to support TVC's efforts."

Through the Equal Justice Works Fellowship, Danica Gonzalves provides representation to underserved veterans in discharge upgrade applications and offers nationwide specialized trainings for attorneys. Danica conducts outreach to build awareness of TVC's Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> as well as PTSD and TBI among the veteran community, while connecting pro bono attorneys with veterans in need.

"When TVC shared with us the stories of veterans who have been denied health and other benefits due to service-related trauma, we knew that we wanted to help in any way we could. Sponsoring this fellowship is only our first investment; we look forward to continuing our work with The Veterans Consortium to advocate for these brave Americans." **Steven H. Schulman**, Pro Bono Partner at Akin Gump.



# LAUNCH OF PRO BONO LEGAL CLINIC

## TVC LAUNCHES WEEKLY VETERANS PRO BONO LEGAL CLINIC AT THE WASHINGTON DC VA MEDICAL CENTER

In July of 2017, the Washington DC VA Medical Center (DC VAMC), Neighborhood Legal Services Program - DC (NLSP-DC), and The Veterans Consortium (TVC), signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** for the purpose of increasing equal access to justice for veterans in need through free legal services to meet their challenges.

As part of this MOU, TVC stepped forward as managing partner for a recurring Veterans Pro Bono Legal Clinic at the DC VAMC. We operate this Legal Clinic at the DC VAMC weekly to (1) facilitate pro bono opportunities in veterans law for law students and introduce them to the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program, (2) help recruit

attorneys for the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program to represent pro se appellants before the US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and (3) provide an opportunity for our TVC staff attorneys to do their personal pro bono service, **all while serving veterans in need.**

Every Friday, dedicated volunteers from local law firms, corporate legal departments, and students from DC-area law schools participating in our TVC Legal Scholars Program<sup>SM</sup>, meet with veterans to conduct triage based on their **stated needs, offer information and resources, and provide referrals.** This Legal Clinic is completely free of charge and is administered in partnership with

NLSP-DC and the Transition & Care Management office of the DC VAMC; it is also open to all veterans regardless of discharge status.

The veterans pro bono legal clinic, operated through TVC's Medical-Legal Partnership with the DC VAMC, serves about 20 veterans and their loved ones each Friday. **This project is a true “labor of love” for Samantha Stiltner**, TVC staff attorney and the legal clinic's program manager for TVC. One high note was the VA General Counsel, James Byrne, personally performing his pro bono service hours at the legal clinic in 2017 and committing to perform future pro bono shifts there with us in 2018.



(Left to Right) Samantha Stiltner, (TVC), Ed Glabus, Mary Ann Gilleece, Ely Ross, Director, Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, Lawrence B. Connell, Acting Director, DC VA Medical Center, Frank Natale, Director, Litigation & Advocacy, Neighborhood Legal Services Program



# TVC LEGAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM<sup>SM</sup>

To help fulfill our mission task to encourage and facilitate pro bono representation by law school clinical and other appropriate programs, we operate The Veterans Consortium Legal Scholars Program<sup>SM</sup>. This effort introduces law students to the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program and exposes them to careers serving veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors under the aegis of our TVC National Appellate & Veterans Law Clinic<sup>SM</sup>. This program comprises some long-standing TVC projects as well as some recent initiatives, including:

- David Isbell Internships
- Jeffrey Stonerock Externships
- Federal Veterans Pro Bono Program Clerkships and TVC Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> Clerkships
- Trophy Sponsorship for the annual National Veterans Law Moot Court Competition
- Equal Justice Works Fellowships, and Equal Justice Works/AmeriCorps — JD Program Summer Fellowships
- Alternative Spring Break for law students
- Trainings and “boot camps” for law school faculty and students
- TVC Clinic-in-a-Footlocker<sup>SM</sup> project
- Limited grant opportunities to help law schools launch a veterans law clinic
- Pro Bono Service opportunities at TVC’s Pop-Up Legal Clinics, our annual TVC Legal Muster<sup>SM</sup>, and at our weekly TVC Veterans Pro Bono Legal Clinic at the DC VA Medical Center (please see related story in this annual report)

“...we were thrilled to add pop-up legal clinics in the nation’s capital as another set of opportunities for law students to explore public interest law careers and perform their service hours while making a difference in the lives of veterans and their loved ones.

—Courtney Smith  
TVC Director of Volunteer Outreach & Education

## CLINIC-IN-A- FOOTLOCKER<sup>SM</sup>

Our TVC Clinic-in-a-Footerlocker<sup>SM</sup> project continued to ship a military footlocker of the best veterans law references and resources to our mission partner law school clinical programs. In 2017, footlockers were sent to Duke, North Carolina Central University, Golden Gate University, Penn State, Southern Illinois University, University of Baltimore, University of Denver, University of North Carolina, West Virginia University, and University of South Dakota.

To learn more about these programs, please visit our website: [www.vetsprobono.org](http://www.vetsprobono.org)





## 2017 AMERICORPS JD INTERN: ANDREW G. BOATRIGHT



There's only a few stop-lights and one Walmart in the small south-eastern Georgia town where AmeriCorps JD Intern Andrew Boatright

grew up. His house was surrounded by 100 acres of cotton fields and 50 acres of cattle. And the way he saw it, you only had three options after high school: stay, go to college or join the military.

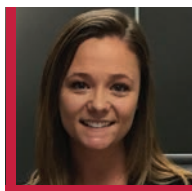
Boatright chose to use Georgia's Hope Scholarship to attend Georgia Southern University. From there he matriculated to Syracuse University College of Law. While looking for a summer internship opportunity, his brother, mentioned The Veterans Consortium, a group he had the opportunity to volunteer with during his time at The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law. Boatright was too late to apply for a David Isbell Internship, but was able to work at TVC as an AmeriCorps JD Intern. The experience was life changing for Boatright.

"Prior to TVC, I was unaware what I wanted to do," Boatright recalls. "But after I got to TVC, met clients and got to do this work, I fell in love with it and the fact that I can make a career out of veterans' law. I wouldn't have had the opportunity without this internship."

Boatright became so involved in one case while working at TVC, that of an exemplary soldier who suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and received an Other Than Honorable discharge, that he was able to take the case back with him to the Syracuse Veterans Clinic and continue to work with this veteran. "He's an amazing man," Boatright says.

Danica Gonzalves, Equal Justice Works Fellow at TVC, says it's this kind of dedication that shows the great value Boatright provided while at TVC. "Andrew exemplified professionalism, diligence, collegiality and passion in advocating for our veterans," Gonzalves says.

## 2017 DAVID ISBELL INTERN: ANNABELL MCWHERTER



Taking part in the very first "pop-up" legal clinic at the Washington DC VA Medical Center during her David Isbell internship with The

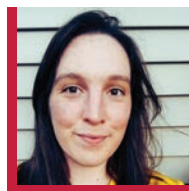
Veterans Consortium is an experience that Annabell McWherter won't forget.

"Just sitting there and listening to the veterans tell their stories, sometimes it was upsetting and sometimes shocking and emotional," McWherter recalls. "But just being able to talk to them made me happy I went to law school and that I can work with them."

McWherter, 25, calls Fort Campbell, Tennessee home, but growing up in a military family, she moved around to various Army bases in the south. After receiving a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Mississippi, McWherter went on to the University of Georgia School of Law. After a summer with a law firm in McLean, Va., she found herself wondering about what was important to her and realizing that she wanted to pursue "something close to my heart." The following spring, during her second year of law school, McWherter was a judicial intern for the Honorable Mary Schoelen at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). "It all kind of started from there," McWherter says.

Since then, she's had the opportunity to see many sides of Veterans Law, including the training pro bono attorneys go through before taking on a case through the CAVC's federal Veterans Pro Bono Program. "Annabelle has her heart in the right place," says Judy Donegan, TVC's Director of Litigation & Case Management. "Seeing her at the clinics, you could tell she was in her element. We are so pleased she got that experience and we were glad to have her as part of our program."

## 2017 DAVID ISBELL INTERN: BRANDY RYAN



Brandy Ryan took a "round-about way" to get to law school and to veterans law. She attended a math/science, publicly-funded board-

ing school about three hours from her home outside Baton Rouge, Louisiana before studying physics at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. She later changed her major to Political Science, with law school in the back of her mind. After graduating in 2012, Ryan worked for a while for a web development firm, where she realized she wanted "to be able to make more of an immediate difference in people's lives." This realization led Ryan to law school and she began taking classes at the University of Michigan Law School in 2016.

Once in law school, Ryan, whose grandfather was an Air Force veteran, was drawn to veterans law. "I've always felt a sense of duty. I want to serve, but I'm not cut out to be in the military myself," says Ryan, 27. "I grew up seeing lots of homeless veterans on the street and that affected me more than anything else."

She watched her grandfather suffer from a degenerative, neurological disorder presumptively caused by Agent Orange, a powerful herbicide sprayed on forestry and vegetation during the Vietnam War that has been associated with long-term health problems. His illness and fighting for benefits that connected his illness with his time of service, "added fuel to the fire," Ryan says.

"We were extremely pleased Brandy came all the way from Michigan Law School rather than go home to Louisiana. She could have had her pick of internships, so we are glad she came here," says Ms. Donegan. "She is enthusiastic and passionate and will bring those qualities wherever she goes."

# 2017 TVC NATIONAL VOLUNTEER CORPS<sup>SM</sup> HONOR ROLL

Without the commitment of individual attorneys, law firms, corporate legal teams, and academic programs, The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program would be hard-pressed to carry out our mission to serve veterans and their loved ones as effectively as we do today. Time and again, the dedicated members of TVC's National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup> have shown a willingness to devote their time, expertise, and resources to this worthy cause – not only as advocates before the Court, but also as strategic advisors, as mentors and guides to our other volunteers, and as generous financial benefactors to The Veterans Consortium. We know from experience that our volunteers join forces with us for the opportunity to put their legal expertise to work for those who have given so much for our country. We thank the many attorneys, mentors, and associated pro bono professionals that have contributed to the success of the federal Veterans Pro Bono Program in 2017.



U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims  
(CAVC), Federal Veterans Pro Bono Program



TVC's Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup>



Medical/Legal Partnerships

## CORPORATE PRO BONO

**Abonar Title Company**   
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**Accenture**   
Mark Merkel (DC)

**AT&T Corporation**   
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## GOVERNMENT PRO BONO

**Office of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia**   
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**Texas Dept. of Health & Human Services Commission**   
Janet Totter (TX)

**United States Department of Veterans Affairs**   
James Byrne (DC)  
Cameron Gore (DC)  
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Reid Nicolosi (DC)

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Laura Warrick (TX)

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Pamela Council (GA)  
Elizabeth Rader (DC)

**Arnall Golden Gregory LLP**   
Bradford Kelley (DC)

**Baker Botts LLP**   
Lauren Dreyer (DC)  
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Michael Stein (OH)  
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Sean Pribyl (DC)  
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**Barbara Burns Harris Esq. PLLC**   
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
**Fortis Law PLC**   
Ashley Gautreau (MI)


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Douglas Greene (TX)


**Grimes Teich Anderson LLP**   
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
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
**Haug Partners**   
Sam Desai (NY)  
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
**The Kane Law Firm**   
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**Laurence J. Skelly, Attorney at Law**   
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Nigel Barrella (DC)


**Law Office of Kimberly Beckett**   
Kim Beckett (TX)


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
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
**Porco Law**   
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
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
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Erik Lopez (DC)  
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Vicki Taitano (DC)

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**Swords to Plowshares**   
Devin Bissman (CA)  
Rose Goldberg (CA)

**Vietnam Veterans of America**   
Amanda Bedford (DC)

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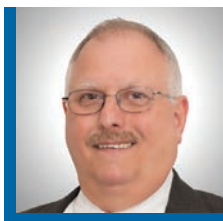
**GARY M. BUTTER, ESQ.**

Vice Chairman & Director  
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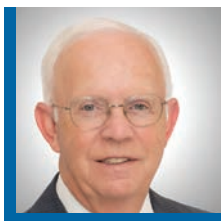
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Secretary & Director  
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**WILLIAM W. LEVI, CPA, CGMA**

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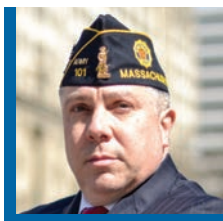
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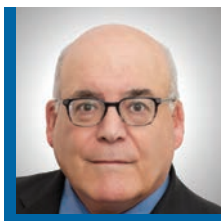
**WILLIAM S. FOSTER, JR., ESQ.**

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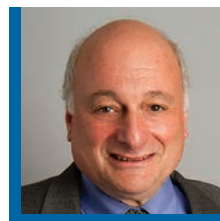
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*(The American Legion)*



**RONALD B. ABRAMS, ESQ.**

Director (through Oct 2017)  
*(National Veterans Legal Services Program)*



**BARTON F. STICHMAN, ESQ.**

Director (from Oct 2017)  
*(National Veterans Legal Services Program)*



## HONORING RONALD B. ABRAMS, ESQ.

The Executive Board of The Veterans Consortium experienced a transition in 2017, when Executive Board Director, Ronald B. Abrams passed the torch following years of dedicated service to The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program and countless veterans. Mr. Abrams joined the Board in 2004 and helped advance TVC's reputation as a well-respected organization.

"We owe Ron a debt of gratitude for the critical role he played in our growth and success. We thank him for his service to the numerous veterans, families, caregivers and survivors we serve around the world."

— Mary Ann Gilleece, Chairman  
TVC Executive Board



# 2017 TVC STAFF



**JIM CARLSEN, ESQ.**  
Director of Program  
Operations



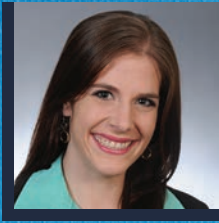
**CLAUDIA DALEY**  
Manager, Client &  
Stakeholder Outreach



**JUDY DONEGAN, ESQ.**  
Director of Litigation &  
Case Management



**ED GLABUS**  
Executive Director



**DANICA GONZALVES, ESQ.**  
Equal Justice Works Fellow



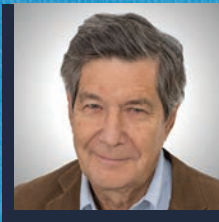
**HATTIE GRAHAM**  
Program Operations  
Specialist



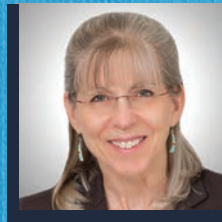
**LEIGH HILLEBRAND**  
Volunteer Outreach &  
Education Coordinator



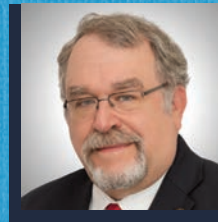
**DR. AARON HOITINK**  
Program Operations



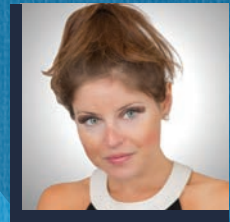
**MIKE KAIL, ESQ.**  
Director of Program  
Operations



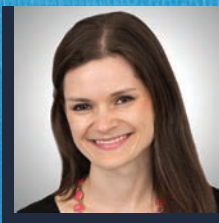
**CATHY KLINGLER, PA**  
Docket Administrator



**DAVID MYERS, ESQ.**  
Director of Case  
Evaluation & Placement



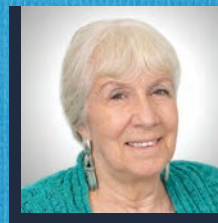
**ELIZABETH PESIN, ESQ.**  
Staff Attorney



**SANDY PETERSON**  
Manager, Client Services



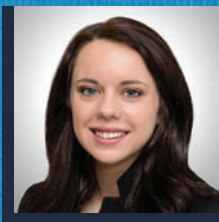
**TAYLOR RAY**  
Client Services Associate



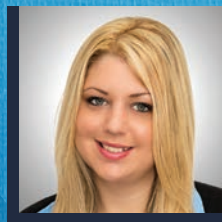
**CAROL WILD SCOTT, ESQ.**  
Deputy Director, Case  
Evaluation & Placement



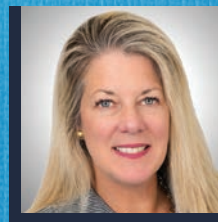
**COURTNEY SMITH, ESQ.**  
Director of Volunteer  
Outreach & Education



**SHANNON STILES**  
Client Services Specialist



**SAMANTHA STILTNER, ESQ.**  
Staff Attorney &  
Program Manager



**MAUREEN THOMAS**  
Deputy Director, Client  
& Stakeholder Outreach



**LEONCE WILSON**  
Veterans Law Specialist



# FINANCIALS

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION (UNAUDITED) DECEMBER 31, 2017

### ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$759,128
Investments	—
Accounts receivable	12,500
Prepaid expenses	186,928
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$958,556</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

#### LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$72,085
Accrued salaries and related benefits	59,303
Deferred grant revenue - LSC	358,047
Deferred grant revenue - Equal Justice Works	8,333
Deferred rent liability	34,436
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>532,204</b>
<b>NET ASSETS - UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>426,352</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$958,556</b>

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (UNAUDITED) YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

### REVENUE

Legal Services Corporation - Veterans Pro Bono Program	\$2,894,005
Silver Anniversary / Pro Bono Program 25 <sup>th</sup> Year	227,054
Corporate contributions	29,262
Equal Justice Works grant	16,667
Donated services	6,000
Investment income	225
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,173,213</b>

### EXPENSE

#### PROGRAM SERVICES

Legal Services Corporation - Veterans Pro Bono Program	\$2,935,200
Equal Justice Works grant	16,667
Donated Funds - The Pro Bono Program	12,902
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>2,964,769</b>

#### SUPPORTING SERVICES

Silver Anniversary / Pro Bono Program 25 <sup>th</sup> Year	154,358
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<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>3,119,127</b>
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<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>54,086</b>
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Net Assets - beginning of year	372,266
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$426,352</b>

## SUMMARY OF DONATED FUNDS AND EXPENSES (UNAUDITED)

Contributions available as of 12/31/2016	\$359,097
Contributions received as of 12/31/2017	243,816
Interest earned 1/1/2016 - 12/31/2017	10
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS/INTEREST</b>	<b>\$602,923</b>
<b>LESS</b>	
Expenses Paid from Contributions 1/1/2017 - 12/31/2017	\$188,291
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS AVAILABLE AS OF 12/31/2017</b>	<b>\$414,632</b>

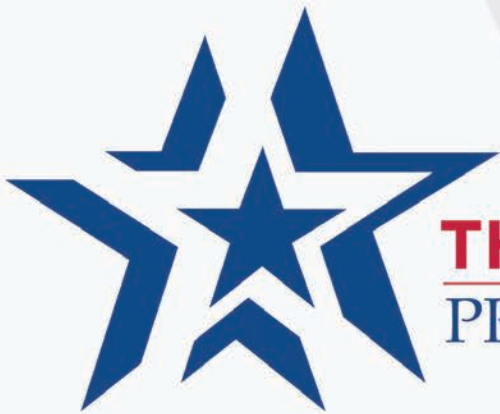


## OUR REPORT CARD SINCE 1992

Success Rate	82%
Veterans Requests Handled	>45,000
Cases Placed	>5,000
Attorneys Trained	>4,000
Value of Donated Services	>\$100 M

*Your gift helps ensure veterans and their loved ones receive the care, benefits, and compensation they earned by serving our country.*

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## THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM PRO BONO PROGRAM® 1992 2017



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### CFC# DONATION

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If you would like to make a donation in memory of a veteran that has served our Country, or a volunteer attorney that has given their time to serve veterans, please contact [outreach@vetsprobono.org](mailto:outreach@vetsprobono.org).



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# The Veterans Consortium

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## PRO BONO PROGRAM<sup>®</sup>

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program (TVC) is the leading national 501(c)(3) charity providing free legal services in federal venues for veterans in need.



TVC operates a global federal Veterans Pro Bono Program on behalf of the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to represent veterans unjustly denied benefits or compensation earned from military service. Our TVC National Volunteer Corps<sup>SM</sup> attorneys also litigate cases that are appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court. Our TVC Discharge Upgrade Program<sup>SM</sup> represents Veterans before military Discharge Review Boards and Boards of Correction for Military Records.



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