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CalVet Names 2014 Summit on Women Veterans Outstanding Veteran Awardees

Sacramento-At our 2014 Summit, “Bridging Gaps, Breaking Barriers,” the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) honors five individuals to receive CalVet annual awards. Each recipient demonstrates exemplary commitment and passion serving our California Veterans. For the first time, there is a tie for Woman Veteran Leader of the Year.

Our awards are part of the 7th annual Summit on Women Veterans, titled “Bridging Gaps, Breaking Barriers,” at the Sacramento Sheraton Grand Hotel on August 24 – 25, 2014. The Summit features several important workshops for our California Women Veterans. This year’s topics include educational benefits, financial literacy, and starting a business. Attendees will also hear from employers in several companies and industries who will share tips and answer questions about getting hired.

CalVet is honored to announce the following 2014 awardees:

Woman Veteran Leader of the Year (Two Awardees)

Irene Cruz of San Gabriel

A Veteran advocate and former Marine, Irene Cruz organized the first ever Minority Women Veterans Conference in 2013. Irene devotes her time assisting Women Veterans with employment, housing and support.

Starlyn Lara of Hayward

U.S. Army Veteran Starlyn Lara served in the Iraq War and works as the program manager for Women Veterans at Swords to Plowshares in San Francisco. Starlyn serves Women Veterans as an advisor to Women Veterans Connect and other Veteran-focused projects.

Lifetime Achievement

Robin Umberg of Villa Park

Brigadier General Robin Umberg U.S. Army, Retired, served a total of 36 years as a U.S. Army Nurse and as the Undersecretary for Veterans Homes at Calvet from 2011-2013. Her passion is advocating for Veterans, ensuring they receive the respect and care they deserve.

California Outstanding Volunteer

Lisa Daniels of Sacramento

As the founder of Unsung Heroes Living History Project, Lisa Daniels focuses on recording stories of underrepresented Veterans for the Library of Congress archives. Lisa's grandmother, a Rosie the Riveter during World War II, inspired her to create the project.

California Corporate Leadership

Mike Mattoch of Sacramento

As the Assistant Vice President for USAA's Western Region, Mike creates lasting partnerships in the private and public sectors supporting programs for Veterans and their families. Mike's passion for Veterans comes from his own military service as a former Captain and Judge Advocate General (JAG) with the California Army National Guard/California State Military Reserve.

Additional Summit Information

- The 2014 Summit on Women Veterans is open to the public, and scheduled at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, located at 1230 J Street, Sacramento from 10AM August 24 to 5:30PM August 25. Check-in opens at 9AM on August 24. To pre-register for the Summit, go to www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets or call (916) 916-503-8334 for more information.
- This year for the first time, a "Dress Code" closet will also be available so Women Veterans can select gently used and new business attire for their closets and job interviews.
- To read more about our 2014 awardees, go to www.calvet.ca.gov/womenvets.
- Hundreds of Women Veterans and other interested stakeholders attended CalVet's seven prior Summits on Women Veterans.

Sponsors for the 2014 Summit on Women Veterans

This year's conference is possible due to funding provided by VetFund Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit promoting the interests of California Veterans and active duty service members. Additional sponsors include Wells Fargo, PG&E, USAA, Disabled American Veterans, Oracle, Kaiser Permanente, Deloitte, the California State University, CA Technologies, the California Lottery, Drexel University Sacramento, the California Veterans Benefit Fund, Ashford University, and the Association of California Commissions for Women.

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