

THE WHITE HOUSE
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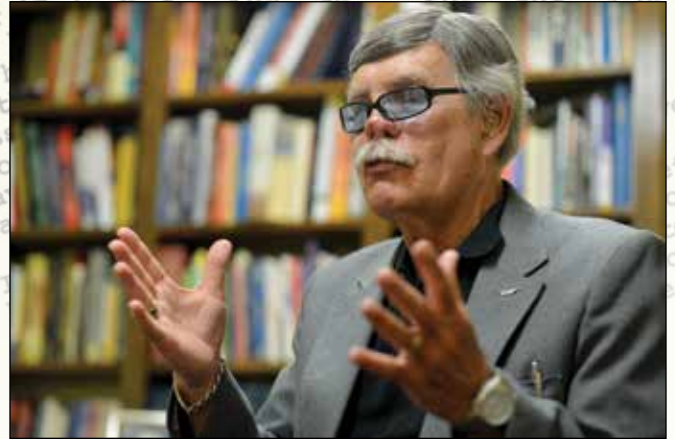
Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year 2013 John Todd

By Ashleigh Bryant

DAV is pleased to announce that Vietnam veteran John Todd has been named the 2013 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. Todd was drafted into the Army in July 1967, then served in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969 as an attack helicopter pilot. He was shot down twice and, because of his combat injuries, was left blind. Todd earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for Valor, 17 Combat Air Medals, the Purple Heart and the RVN Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star.

Following a year's recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 1970, he moved to New York City to be closer to a renowned eye surgeon. Todd became the national coordinator for Vietnam Veterans for a Just Peace, going to work for President Nixon and his staff writing television and radio editorials and appearing as a spokesman for the President. His work earned him a Freedoms Foundation award in 1971 and 1972 for Excellence in Political Communication.

After graduating in 1976 from the University of



John Todd, an accomplished professor of American legal studies and business law, speaks with students in his office at Rochester College in Rochester Hills, Mich.

Michigan, Todd went on to attend the Georgetown University Law Center, graduating with a Juris Doctor. He later served as the national legislative director of the Blinded Veterans Association, where he authored legislation that provided for a rebuttable presumption of service-connection for permanently and totally disabled veterans so their spouses and dependents could qualify for death and indemnity compensation. This bill was passed by the House and Senate and signed into law by President Carter.

Later, Todd moved to Michigan and served as the chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program (VVLV). In 1984, he was invited to the White House and met with President Reagan to take part in a ceremony devoted to the VVLV.

“Mr. Todd’s contributions to the veterans’ community are immeasurable,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. “Despite his injuries, he has lived a full life, marked with great success and dedication. His life’s work has no doubt made lasting

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John Todd, a former Cobra pilot, holds a shadow box containing his military service medals. Todd served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 at age 22, and was awarded the Purple Heart, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross for Valor and 17 combat air medals, one with “V” device.



All Aboard...

Napa Valley Yacht Club hosted DAV members at its clubhouse for one week in June. Members were invited to sail and fish with the crew of the Independence, which is owned by Monterey Bay Veterans and operated by volunteers.



Outstanding Service...

Ralph Poe, right, of Ashe Co. Chapter 8 presents Marvin Greer with a Lifetime Achievement Award for longterm service to Veterans of Foreign Wars. Poe received a Chapter Commander of the Year Award.



Free Health Expo for Veterans, Active-Duty Men and Women...

Vascular surgeon Christopher Stout, left, receives a DAV hat from radio host "Cocoa Butter" of 95.7 RnB FM, who is also a veteran, and Chapter 21 Commander George L. Smith. Earlier this year, DAV Chapter 21 in Norfolk, Va., and the National Organization for Aortic Awareness hosted the first Veterans Health Exposition at the Hampton (Va.) Convention Center.

Disabled Veteran of the Year

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impressions on veterans and their families, as well as with the members of his community."

Todd joined DAV Chapter 19 in Fraser, Mich., in 2010, where he serves as the Judge Advocate. He is currently a full-time professor of business law and American legal studies at Rochester College in Rochester Hills, Mich. He lives in Oxford, Mich., with Joyce, his wife of 38 years. Together they have two daughters and one grandson.

In 2010, Todd was featured in the television documentary, "Our Vietnam Generation," on PBS.

"We thank Mr. Todd for his commendable service to the nation and his continued dedication to veterans and their family members," said National Service Director Garry Augustine. "His legislative work has changed lives and continues to help DAV fulfill promises to injured and ill veterans and their families. He is a model for

turning one's circumstances into successful service, and he is truly deserving of this honor." ■



Despite his vision loss, John Todd (right) is an accomplished carpenter, having undertaken multiple construction projects at his home and for the newly acquired DAV Chapter office in Berkley, Mich.