

**GERRY BYRNE JAKE WOOD ZACH ISCOL**  
CO-CHAIRS

**PROUDLY PRESENT THE**  
**26th ANNUAL NEW YORK CITY GALA**  
**IN CELEBRATION OF**

**THE 248th**  
**UNITED STATES**  
**MARINE CORPS**  
**BIRTHDAY**  
**NOVEMBER 8, 2023**

**BENEFITTING**  
**SEMPER FI & AMERICA'S FUND**  
**and ANSWER THE CALL:**  
**NEW YORK POLICE AND FIRE WIDOWS'**  
**AND CHILDREN'S BENEFIT FUND**

**THE INTREPID MUSEUM**

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# COURAGE. COMMITMENT. CHARACTER.

Paramount is proud to salute the U.S. Marine Corps on 248 years of extraordinary service to our country.

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## 26th ANNIVERSARY NEW YORK CITY GALA IN CELEBRATION OF THE 248th USMC BIRTHDAY

**Benefitting SEMPER FI & AMERICA'S FUND  
and ANSWER THE CALL-THE NEW YORK POLICE &  
FIRE WIDOW'S & CHILDRENS BENEFIT FUND**

**Pluto TV, we continue to love you!!** And thank you to the team at the Paramount Veterans Network for your incredible support in producing this 26th version of our virtual 248th United States Marine Corps Birthday Gala. 🇺🇸 We are pleased and honored that this evening benefits the works of the **Semper Fi & America's Fund** and **Answer The Call: The New York Police and Fire Widows and Children's Benefit Fund**. 🇺🇸 We gather to honor our Corps as well as all of those heroes

in the uniformed services committed and devoted to protecting our nation. We can't say thank you enough to those who have served and those who are, at this very moment, in harms' way on behalf of us all. 🇺🇸 We are privileged to have **General Eric Smith**, Commandant of the Marine Corps as our Military Guest of Honor. 🇺🇸 Tonight, we also present the Allen J. Striffler

USMC "Marine For Life" Award to **General Joseph F. Dunford**, USMC (ret) and the Honorable David Dinkins Vanguard Honor to **SgtMaj Carlton Kent**, USMC (ret). Both icons of honor and integrity. 🇺🇸 And thank you **Rich Jones and the Paramount team** for again producing this year's virtual event. 🇺🇸 Finally, our gratitude to our national audience of Birthday celebrants and to everyone who has helped make this celebration a memorable tribute to our family of Marines.



Gerry, Zach and Jake aboard the USS Kearsarge, May 2017

**GERRY BYRNE ZACH ISCOL JAKE WOOD**  
DINNER CO-CHAIRMEN

NYC  
MARINE  
CORPS  
BIRTHDAY  
GALA





**GERRY BYRNE\* JAKE WOOD\* ZACH ISCOL\***

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CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

\*USMC # CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT



# Soaring to new heights.

We celebrate those who always strive: to rise higher, push through every boundary, and overcome every obstacle. We're proud to show our support for the United States Marine Corps and all those whose achievements put them in rarefied air.



**HAPPY 248<sup>TH</sup>  
BIRTHDAY  
UNITED STATES  
MARINE CORPS**



**SEMPER FIDELIS**

**Congratulations to  
General (Ret.) Joseph F. Dunford Jr.  
Marine for Life**

**Congratulations to  
Sergeant Major (Ret.) Carlton Kent  
David Dinkins Vanguard Award**



**PROGRAM**  
PRODUCED BY  
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NETWORK

**INTRODUCTION**  
**JIM AXELROD**  
CBS NEWS ANCHOR & CORRESPONDENT

**WELCOME**  
**GERRY BYRNE**

**REMARKS**  
**JAKE WOOD, ZACH ISCOL**

**ADVANCE THE COLORS**

**MUSICAL INTERLUDE**  
**THE UNITED STATES MARINE  
DRUM & BUGLE CORPS**

**THE 248th USMC BIRTHDAY  
CAKE CUTTING CEREMONY**

**WELCOME BY MILITARY GUEST OF HONOR**  
**GENERAL ERIC SMITH**

**38th COMMANDANT, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**THE CORPORAL ALLEN J. STRIFFLER  
2023 USMC MARINE FOR LIFE AWARD**

**GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD, JR.**

**(USMC RET.), 36TH COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS,  
19TH CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

**THE 2023 HONORABLE DAVID DINKINS  
VANGUARD AWARD**

**SERGEANT MAJOR CARLTON KENT**

**(USMC RET.), 16TH SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS**

**CLOSING**

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**MILITARY GUEST OF HONOR**  
**GENERAL ERIC M. SMITH**  
**39th COMMANDANT**  
**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**G**eneral Smith is currently serving as the 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps. Born in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in Plano, Texas, General Smith graduated from Texas A&M University and was commissioned in 1987. He has commanded at every level, including Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment during Operation Assured Response in Monrovia, Liberia; 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment during Operation Iraqi Freedom; and 8th Marine Regiment/ Regimental Combat Team 8 during Operation Enduring Freedom. He also served in Caracas, Venezuela as part of the U.S. Military Group.

As a General Officer, he commanded U.S. Marine Corps Forces Southern Command, 1st Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, and Marine Corps Combat Development Command.

General Smith's staff assignments as a General Officer include serving as the Director of Capability Development Directorate, Combat Development and Integration; Senior Military Assistant to both the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Defense; Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration; and the 36th Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.





**SPECIAL GUEST**

# LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID G. BELLON

**COMMANDER, U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES RESERVE  
AND U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES SOUTH**

Lieutenant General Bellon is a native of Fort Polk, Louisiana, and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1987 and the University of Missouri School of Law in 1990. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1989. Bellon began service as an Infantry Officer with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. He then served as a Judge Advocate with 1st Force Service Support Group.

In 1997, he left active duty and joined the Selected Marine Corps Reserve serving six years with 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion in a variety of positions. As a civilian, Bellon founded his own law firm in 1999 located in Oceanside, CA.

After 9/11, he returned to active duty for four combat tours in support of both OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). During OIF I, he served as Operations Officer for 4th LAR with both TASK FORCE TARAWA and TASK FORCE SCORPION. During OIF II, Bellon served as the Intelligence Officer for Regimental Combat Team 1 during its 14 month deployment in and around the City of Al Fallujah, Iraq, participating in both battles for the city. His third OIF tour was in Command of Battalion Task Force 3d Battalion, 23d Marine Regiment, in 2007-2008. The Task Force executed counter-insurgency operations in and around the city of Al Haditha, Iraq.

In 2008, Bellon was selected as the Marine Corps Reserves representative in a full-time student status attending Top Level School at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. While there, he was promoted to Colonel and received subsequent orders for deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Bellon deployed to Afghanistan in September 2009 with the British 6th Division. While in Afghanistan, he served as the Chief of Operations for Southern Afghanistan during NATO's 2010 surge of forces to secure the strategically vital area in and around Kandahar City.

Bellon was promoted to Brigadier General in 2013. His assignments as a General Officer prior to his current billet include Deputy Commander (Mobilization) 1st Marine Expeditionary Force; Deputy Marine Forces Command; Director Reserve Affairs; Commander Marine Forces South; and Director of Strategy, Policy, and Plans (J5) U.S. Southern Command. He was promoted to his current rank and assumed duties as Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve and U.S. Marine Corps Forces South.

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# MARINES & SAILORS

# Kilo Company

**3<sup>RD</sup> BN 1<sup>ST</sup> MARINES**  
**(RVN 1967-68)**

## “THE COMMANDANT’S OWN” THE UNITED STATES MARINE DRUM & BUGLE CORPS



**T**he Commandant’s Own,” The United States Marine Drum & Bugle Corps performs martial and popular music for hundreds of thousands of spectators each year. Comprised of over 85 Marine musicians, dressed in ceremonial red and white uniforms, it is known world-wide as a premier musical marching unit.

Throughout the summer months the unit performs in the traditional Evening Parades held at Marine Barracks Washington, and in the Sunset Parades at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia. The Drum & Bugle Corps travels more than 50,000 miles annually, performing in 500 events across the nation and abroad.

The history of the unit can be traced to the early days of the Marine Corps. In the 18th and 19th centuries military musicians, or “field musics,” provided a means of passing commands to Marines in battle formations. The sound of various drum beats and bugle calls could be easily heard over the noise of the battlefield and signaled Marines to attack the enemy or retire for the evening. Through the 1930’s, Marine Corps posts were still authorized a number of buglers and drummers to play the traditional calls and to ring a ship’s bell to signal the time.

The United States Marine Drum & Bugle Corps was formed in 1934 to augment the United States Marine Band. The unit provided musical support to ceremonies around the nation’s capitol and, during

World War II, was tasked with Presidential support duties. For this additional role, they were awarded the scarlet and gold breast cord by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which they still proudly display on their uniform. When the war ended, the Drum & Bugle Corps resumed performing at various military and public ceremonies.

In the early 1950s the unit gained considerable acclaim performing for an increasing number of civilian audiences. Music composed specifically for their unique selection of instruments helped establish their reputation for excellence during this period. These factors also led to the unit’s formal designation as “The Commandant’s Own”—a title noting their unique status as musicians for the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

In the tradition of their “field music” predecessors, these musicians in “The Commandant’s Own” are Marines in the truest sense of the word. Every enlisted member is a graduate of Marine Corps recruit training and is trained in basic infantry skills. Prior to enlisting, each Marine must pass a demanding audition for service in the Drum & Bugle Corps. Following Recruit Training and Marine Combat Training, the Marines are assigned to “The Commandant’s Own.”

The unit travels the world along with the United States Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon and the Official Color Guard of the Marine Corps as the United States Marine Corps Battle Color Detachment.

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# Happy 248th Birthday, Marines

*Congratulations to*

**GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD**

*our latest*

**MARINE FOR LIFE**

**Semper fi,**

**Loretta & Walter Anderson**



The **UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS** represents a history, legacy and ethic that are unsurpassed as cornerstones to the strength of America. The rich heritage that is the Corps, the indelible mark that The Marines have stamped on our society and the positive influence they have provided in shaping America's position as a global power and firebrand of democracy, are all rooted in the strength, integrity and commitment of the individual Marine. It is the individual Marine who has made and continues to make the Corps. And it is the individual Marine, with an ethic shaped in the fields of America's defense, who has helped build the communities that are our nation, forged on solid foundations of ethics, integrity and personal commitment. It is that **"MARINE FOR LIFE"** spirit that makes a difference to our Corps and to our nation.

## **CORPORAL ALLEN J. STRIFFLER USMC**



Brooklyn born Allen Striffler joined the Marines 1943 at age 17. Post training at Parris Island, New River and Camp Pendleton, he deployed to the 4th Marine Division. Four invasions as a field radio operator followed: Kwajalein, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. Wounded on Iwo, D plus 4, February 23, 1945, he saw the flag on Mt. Suribachi from the beach while waiting to be evacuated to a hospital ship. He returned to Iwo Jima two days later and remained in combat until the island was secured.

When the war ended, Corporal Striffler was sent to China to finish his enlistment. Honorably discharged in 1946, Mr. Striffler got his GED and then attended Long Island and Columbia Universities. His career in the oil and shipping industries began at Standard Oil (1946-1949). He retired as the President and CEO of Greenwich Marine Transportation of Greenwich, Connecticut. Mr. Striffler's personal decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

On June 26, 2014 Allen entered "heaven's scene" to join that special Marine guard detail. As a Marine, husband, father, and friend, no one stood taller. He, indeed, was and is our "MARINE FOR LIFE" and will be from this day forward.





THE CORPORAL ALLEN J. STRIFFLER  
2023 USMC MARINE FOR LIFE AWARD

# GENERAL JOSEPH DUNFORD JR.

(USMC RET.), 36TH COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS,  
19TH CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF



**G**eneral Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. served as the 19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation's highest-ranking military officer, and the principal military advisor to the President, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council from October 1, 2015, through September 30, 2019.

Prior to becoming Chairman, General Dunford served as the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps. He previously served as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps from 2010 to 2012 and was Commander, International Security Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan from February 2013 to August 2014.

A native of Boston, Massachusetts, General Dunford graduated from Saint Michael's College and was commissioned in 1977. He has served as an infantry officer at all levels, to include command of 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, and command of the 5th Marine Regiment during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

General Dunford also served as the Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Marine Division, Marine Corps Director of Operations, and Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations. He commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force and served as the Commander, Marine Forces U.S. Central Command.

His Joint assignments include duty as the Executive Assistant to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of the Global and Multilateral Affairs Division (J-5), and Vice Director for Operations on the Joint Staff (J-3).

A graduate of the U.S. Army Ranger School, Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, and the U.S. Army War College, General Dunford also earned master's degrees in Government from Georgetown University and in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.



THANK YOU

**General Eric M. Smith**  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

&

CONGRATULATIONS

**General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.**  
Marine for Life

**Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent**  
David Dinkins Vanguard Award

**PNIC**  
VETERANS AFFINITY GROUP



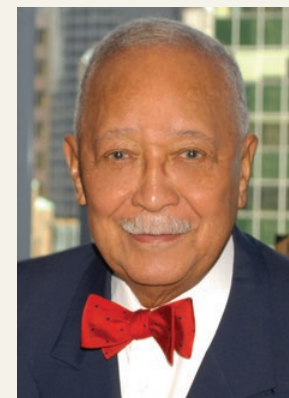
CO-FOUNDERS: ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ & GERRY BYRNE

CREATED TO ANNUALLY RECOGNIZE A  
VISIONARY, INDIVIDUAL OR ENTITY, THAT'S BEEN  
A POSITIVE FORCE IN SHAPING THE CORPS

THE HONORABLE  
**DAVID  
DINKINS**  
VANGUARD  
AWARD

**THE HONORABLE DAVID DINKINS**

106TH MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS, USMC, MONTFORD POINT MARINES  
JULY 10, 1927 - NOVEMBER 23, 2020



David Norman Dinkins served as NYS Assemblyman, President of the NYC Board of Elections, City Clerk and Manhattan Borough President before being elected 106th Mayor of the City of New York in 1989.

Born in Trenton, New Jersey, in July, 1927, Mayor Dinkins graduated with honors from Howard University in 1950 with a B.S. in mathematics and an LLB from Brooklyn Law School in 1956. He is a recipient of The Congressional Gold Medal for his service as a Montford Point Marine in the United States Marine Corps, during World War II.

As the first (and only) African American Mayor of NYC, major successes of note under his administration included: "Safe Streets, Safe City: Cops and Kids"; the revitalization of Times Square as we have come to know it; an unprecedented agreement keeping the US Open Tennis Championships in New York City for 99 years — a contract that continues

to bring more financial influx to New York City than the Yankees, Mets, Knicks and Rangers COMBINED — comparable to having the Super Bowl in New York for two weeks every year! The Dinkins administration also created Fashion Week, Restaurant Week, and *Broadway on Broadway*, which have all continued to thrive for decades, attracting international attention and tremendous revenue to the city each year.

Mayor Dinkins joined Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) as a Professor in the Practice of Urban Public Policy in 1994. He has hosted the *David N. Dinkins Leadership & Public Policy Forum* for 23 years which has welcomed keynote speakers such as Representative John Lewis; Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton; NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio; and two US Attorney Generals — Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch.

Mayor Dinkins was an active participant on numerous organizational boards — with his primary focus on youth. In 2013, Mayor Dinkins became a first time author when, *A Mayor's Life: Governing New York's Gorgeous Mosaic*, was published. A memoir which chronicles the life of this devoted public servant as a New Yorker who remained in love with his city.

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THE 2023 HONORABLE DAVID DINKINS  
VANGUARD AWARD

# SGT. MAJ. CARLTON W. KENT

16th SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS

Sgt. Maj. Kent completed recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., in March 1976 and was assigned to the 1st Marine Brigade. In May 1978, Sgt. Maj. Kent was transferred to Marine Security Guard Battalion where he served as a Marine Security Guard. He served at American Embassy, Kinshasa, Zaire and Panama.

In June 1981, Sgt. Maj. Kent transferred to Fort Benning for Airborne School and Parachute Riggers School at Fort Lee, Va. In June of 1982 he was assigned as 2nd Air Delivery Platoon Commander, and parachute rigger billets in various commands aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C.

In February 1983, Sgt. Maj. Kent was transferred to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif., for duty as a drill instructor, senior drill instructor and battalion drill master with First Battalion. In January 1985, he was meritoriously promoted to Gunnery Sergeant.

In May 1985, Sgt. Maj. Kent transferred to 3rd Air Delivery Platoon as Platoon Sergeant. In June 1986 he transferred to Engineer Company, BSSG-1 1st Marine Brigade, Hawaii, as Company Gunnery Sergeant. In March 1988, Sgt. Maj. Kent was assigned to Noncommissioned Officers School, 1st Marine Brigade as the NCOIC.

In February 1989, Sgt. Maj. Kent transferred to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., as a student at Drill Instructor School. After completion of Drill Instructor School, Sgt. Maj. Kent was assigned to Naval Aviation Officers Candidate School in Pensacola, Fla., as a Drill Instructor, Chief Drill Instructor, and First Sergeant. In February 1990, Sgt. Maj. Kent was promoted

to First Sergeant and assigned as First Sergeant, MATSG, Pensacola, Fla.

In June 1992, he transferred to 4th Marine Regiment for duty. In June 1993, he transferred to the Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. After graduation, in February 1994 he was transferred and assigned as First Sergeant, Battery L, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment.

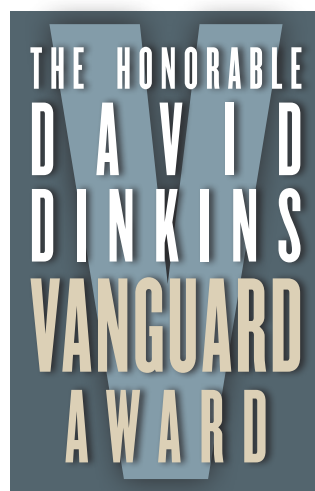
In December 1994, he assumed the duties as Sergeant Major, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment. In August 1997, Sgt. Maj. Kent was transferred to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif., where he was assigned duties as Sergeant Major 2nd Recruit Training Battalion and in September 1999 as Sergeant Major Recruit Training Regiment.

In May 2001, he was transferred to Marine Forces Europe/FMF Europe, Stuttgart, Germany, where he was assigned the duties as the Sergeant Major of Marine Forces Europe. In April 2004, he was

transferred to I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif., to serve as the Sergeant Major of the I Marine Expeditionary Force.

Sgt. Maj. Kent assumed the post as the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on 25 April 2007 and served in this position until 9 June 2011.

His awards include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with Gold Star in lieu of second award, a Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, and the Combat Action Ribbon. He is the recipient of the General Gerald C. Thomas Award for inspirational leadership.



## ABOUT OUR BENEFICIARY



**WE WORK TO ENSURE THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND.** Semper Fi & America's Fund provides urgently needed resources and lifetime support for combat wounded. Our programs are designed with a commitment to those we serve. The Fund is dedicated to providing immediate financial assistance and lifetime support to our nation's critically wounded, ill, and injured service members, veterans, and military families.

We operate our programs and services through a "needs-based" approach. Staff and volunteers work one-on-one with our service members, veterans, and military families—providing ongoing support for as long as legitimate needs require.

Experienced at anticipating needs, our case managers often introduce new programs to further assist service members and military families throughout the journey to recovery and transition back into their communities.

The Fund can process, on average, over 130 grant requests each day. We typically deliver assistance within 24-48 hours of receiving an emergency request, and within a week for non-urgent cases.

**OUR MISSION IS CRITICAL. OUR DUTY IS CLEAR.** We apply donations to comprehensive, innovative, and proven programs that deliver immediate and long-lasting impact. Our promise is heartfelt and lifelong: The Fund ensures that service members and military families have the resources they need during their recovery and throughout transition back to their communities. [thefund.org](http://thefund.org)



## ABOUT OUR BENEFICIARY



**OUR MISSION IS TO SUPPORT THE FAMILIES** of New York City Police Officers, Firefighters, Port Authority Police, and EMS Personnel who have been killed in the line of duty. When these brave men and women make the ultimate sacrifice to protect our city, we believe it is our civic duty to support the families these heroes have left behind. The New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund currently provides financial assistance, hosts special gatherings, and offers a network of support to approximately 600 families. Each year, they distribute over \$4 million to the families of our fallen heroes. [answerthecall.org](http://answerthecall.org)

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** Immediately after the loss of a first responder, we provide each family with \$50,000 to help alleviate some of the uncertainty such a tragedy can bring. That family then becomes part of our larger Benefit Fund family, and each widow or widower will receive an annual stipend for the remainder of his or her life or as long as we have the means to do so.

**A NETWORK OF SUPPORT** Additionally, we help provide a network of support and special events for our families. As a member of our community, families are invited to various social gatherings that we host throughout the year. These events provide our families with the opportunity to have some fun, while also connecting them with other families who have been through similar experiences. We make a commitment to the families of our fallen heroes that we will never forget about them or the sacrifice their loved ones have made.



# Committed to Community

Fiserv is proud to support the 26th annual New York City Gala in celebration of the 248th birthday of the United States Marine Corps.



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**fiserv.**

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES **JIM AXELROD** CHIEF INVESTIGATIVE AND SENIOR NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT, CBS NEWS

**J**im Axelrod is the chief investigative and senior national correspondent for CBS News, reporting for *CBS Mornings*, the *CBS Evening News*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, and other CBS News broadcasts.

While at CBS News, Axelrod has covered a broad range of domestic and international stories, notably the war in Iraq and the American invasion of Afghanistan. In 2003, Axelrod was the first television journalist to report live from Baghdad's Saddam International Airport immediately after it fell to U.S. troops. His live coverage of the U.S. Army firing artillery rounds into Iraqi positions was the first to be broadcast by a reporter embedded with ground troops engaged in combat in Iraq. Axelrod also covered the departure of U.S. troops from Iraq and was the last reporter to leave with the military in December 2011.

Axelrod's investigative journalism has been honored with a Peabody Award for his series on West Virginia's opioid addiction crisis, a George Polk Award for his work, and an Edward R. Murrow award for his reporting on the genetic testing industry. He was also part of the CBS News team honored with a 2010 duPont-Columbia Silver Baton for *CBS Reports: Children of the Recession*. Axelrod also won Emmy awards in 2002, 2014 and 2016.

Axelrod joined CBS News in 1996 as a Miami-based correspondent and later served in the Dallas Bureau (1997-1999) and New York Bureau (1999-2006). He also served as CBS News' chief White House correspondent (2006-2009) and was named a CBS News national correspondent in 2009. From 2012-2016, Axelrod was the anchor of the Saturday edition of *CBS Evening News*.

Before joining CBS News in 1996, he was a political reporter at WRAL-TV in Raleigh, North Carolina (1993-1996). Previously, Axelrod was a reporter for WSTM-TV Syracuse, New York (1990-1993); and at WUTR-TV Utica, New York (1989-1990). He began his career at WVII-TV Bangor, Maine, in 1989.

Born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Axelrod was graduated from Cornell University in 1985 with a bachelor of arts in history and from Brown University in 1989 with a master of arts in history.

Axelrod is the author of *In The Long Run: A Father, A Son, and Unintentional Lessons In Happiness*, which was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2011. He and his wife, Christina, have three children and live in Montclair, New Jersey.



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## **PRESENTER JOHN ELLIOT METEOROLOGIST, TELEVISION HOST, CBS**

**J**ohn Elliott joined CBS New York in January 2007 as a meteorologist on CBS2 News This Morning and CBS2 News At Noon.

Prior to joining WCBS, Elliott worked two years at KCBS-TV in Los Angeles. Before that, he spent two years with NBC News and MSNBC, appearing weekday mornings on NBC as a weathercaster on "Early Today." He also handled a wide variety of assignments as an anchor and correspondent on MSNBC. Elliott served as a 2004 MSNBC presidential campaign correspondent in the battleground state of Iowa. He also reported from numerous bases and posts throughout the nation as troops were deployed for the war in Iraq, and spent time onboard the USS Abraham Lincoln.

Prior to joining NBC, Elliott worked for XETV-TV in San Diego, where he served as an anchor on the Fox station's morning newscasts. He was also a morning news anchor for KGET-TV, the NBC affiliate in Bakersfield, California. Elliott began working as a weathercaster, first at WRBL-TV, the CBS affiliate in Columbus, Georgia, then at KGET before making the transition to his role as a news anchor in Bakersfield.

Elliott is a recipient of the California Associated Press award for Best Weathercaster, and has received numerous honors for his news features and general assignment reporting.

Elliott received his B.A. in radio, television and film from Wayne State University in Detroit and his master's in communications from Central Missouri State University. He also studied meteorology under Mississippi State University. Before embarking on his career in broadcasting, Elliott was an advertising copywriter and producer and also taught media courses at Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan and Central Missouri State.



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including Fisher House (Executive Committee), The Intrepid Museum, The USO, City Meals on Wheels, The Gotham Film & Media Institute, Veterans Advantage (Advisory Board), The Bob Woodruff Foundation, The Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research, Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Plaza, The Creative Coalition, The Hamptons International Film Festival (Chairman, Advisory Board), and The John A. Reisenbach Foundation (Chairman Emeritus). He is also on the Advisory Board of the Fordham University Gabelli School and the Board of NYC's John Jay College of Criminal Justice. In November 2012, Mr. Byrne also launched, as Founder/Chairman, the first ever *Veterans Week NYC*, a series of events dedicated to honoring and supporting veterans and their families. And in May 2017, as Founder/Chairman, Mr. Byrne launched *Veterans on Campus NYC*, a veteran's support consortium comprised of all the NYC colleges and universities where veterans attend on the GI Bill. In 2022, Byrne was also elected Chairman/Founder of the *Mediflix-Vetiflix veterans' channel* launching in early 2024. Lastly, Byrne is a member of the Brand Velocity Partners "Accelerators".

Mr. Byrne was awarded the "Salah M. Hassanein Humanitarian Award" at ShowEast '96, New York's Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center's 2002 Distinguished Service Award and the NYPD Marine Corps Association 2002 "Semper Fi" Award for his work in the community. And in June 2009, NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented Mr. Byrne the "Made In NY" Award for his support of Gotham's entertainment and media industries. In November 2017, General Robert Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, presented Mr. Byrne the Department of the Navy's Meritorious Public Service Award. And in March 2019, he was named to the Hillvets 100. Hillvets is a DC based initiative seeking to amplify the power and presence of veterans in government, policy, and politics. In November 2022, Byrne was inducted into the Fordham University Military Hall of Fame.

Mr. Byrne is a member of The British Academy of Film & Television Arts and The New York Athletic Club.

A 1966 graduate of Fordham College, Mr. Byrne served as a Marine Officer in Vietnam in 1968/69 and was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V.

**P**MC owns or has controlling interest in leading entertainment, fashion, art and media brands that include *Rolling Stone*, *Variety*, *WWD*, *Deadline Hollywood*, *IndieWire*, *Hollywood Life*, *TVLine*, *She Media*, *The Robb Report*, *Art in America*, *South by Southwest*, *Dick Clark Productions* and *Vox Media*. Byrne's decades of accomplishments as a media executive, entrepreneur and community leader are highlighted by a long run as publisher of *Variety* where he dramatically transformed that business into a powerful, diversified, global media brand. The start-up publisher of both *Electronic Media* and *Crain's New York Business*, Byrne also successfully created *The Quill Awards* for NBC before he led a division of Nielsen that included *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Billboard*, *Adweek* and *Backstage*.

A staunch believer in "participation", Mr. Byrne is on the boards of numerous not-for-profits



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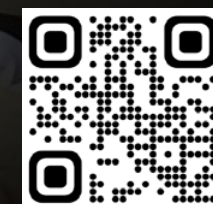
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As a Marine, he served two tours in Iraq and on other assignments throughout Africa and the Middle East. During his second tour of duty, he led a combined unit of US Marines and Iraq soldiers in some of the heaviest fighting of the Iraq War during the Second Battle of Fallujah, where he was awarded a Bronze Star for valor. He later helped build many of the components of the Marine Corps' first special operations command and deployed on one of the first MARSOC teams to deploy overseas.

Over the past decade, Iscol has built and led businesses and a nonprofit mental healthcare provider, the Headstrong Project. The Headstrong Project now cares for over 1,000 veterans a week in 30+ cities and counting to provide world-class, cost, and bureaucracy free mental healthcare veterans and service members need to recover from hidden wounds and get back to the best versions of themselves.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City, Iscol led over 40 federal, state, and city agencies as the deputy director of Joint New York Medical Station, one of the largest and only successful

COVID field hospitals in the country.

A 2001 graduate of Cornell University, he was the youngest recipient of Phillips Exeter Academy's John Phillips Award, a member of the 2013 Team USA for USA Triathlon, and a grand marshal of the 2019 New York City Veterans Day Parade. In 2007, while still on active duty, he testified before the United States Senate about the need to protect Iraqi refugees, especially translators and others who put their lives in danger to help US forces.

He lives in NYC with his wife, Meredith Melling, and their four children.

**A** crisis tested leader, Zachary Iscol has led in settings ranging from combat operations in Iraq to the frontlines of COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Sandy here in New York. His experience includes building a pioneering nonprofit mental healthcare provider, leading one of the premiere military journalism outlets, and serving as a strong advocate for immigrants and underserved communities. Two of his former commanding officers cited him as the officer they would personally select to lead their sons into combat.



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CO-CHAIR  
**JAKE WOOD**  
CEO, GROUNDSWELL



Under Wood's leadership, Team Rubicon scaled to 200 full-time employees across four offices and operated a \$55 million P&L. In total, Wood helped raise nearly \$300 million for Team Rubicon's work through a mix of online donor acquisition, family foundations, and corporate partnerships — to include complex licensing and co-marketing deals. Team Rubicon has become widely recognized for its strong corporate culture, which has been recognized numerous times as a “best places to work in America,” and its technological innovation via partnerships with companies like Microsoft, Twilio, Palantir, and others. Wood remains Team Rubicon's chairman.

Prior to Team Rubicon, Wood served four years in an elite Marine Corps scout-sniper unit, leading Marines in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. He graduated at the top of his class at boot camp, the School of Infantry, and the Marine Scout-Sniper Course. He received three meritorious promotions, with one in combat, and is the recipient of the Navy-Marine Commendation Medal for Valor.

Wood is a sought-after thought leader on topics of organizational culture and leadership, frequently speaking at corporate and industry events. Notable corporate clients include Goldman Sachs, Intuit, Farmers Insurance, Travelers Insurance, Facebook, and Carhartt.

Wood's memoir, *Once A Warrior*, was an Amazon best-seller and Tom Brokaw stated that “it's the book America needs right now.”

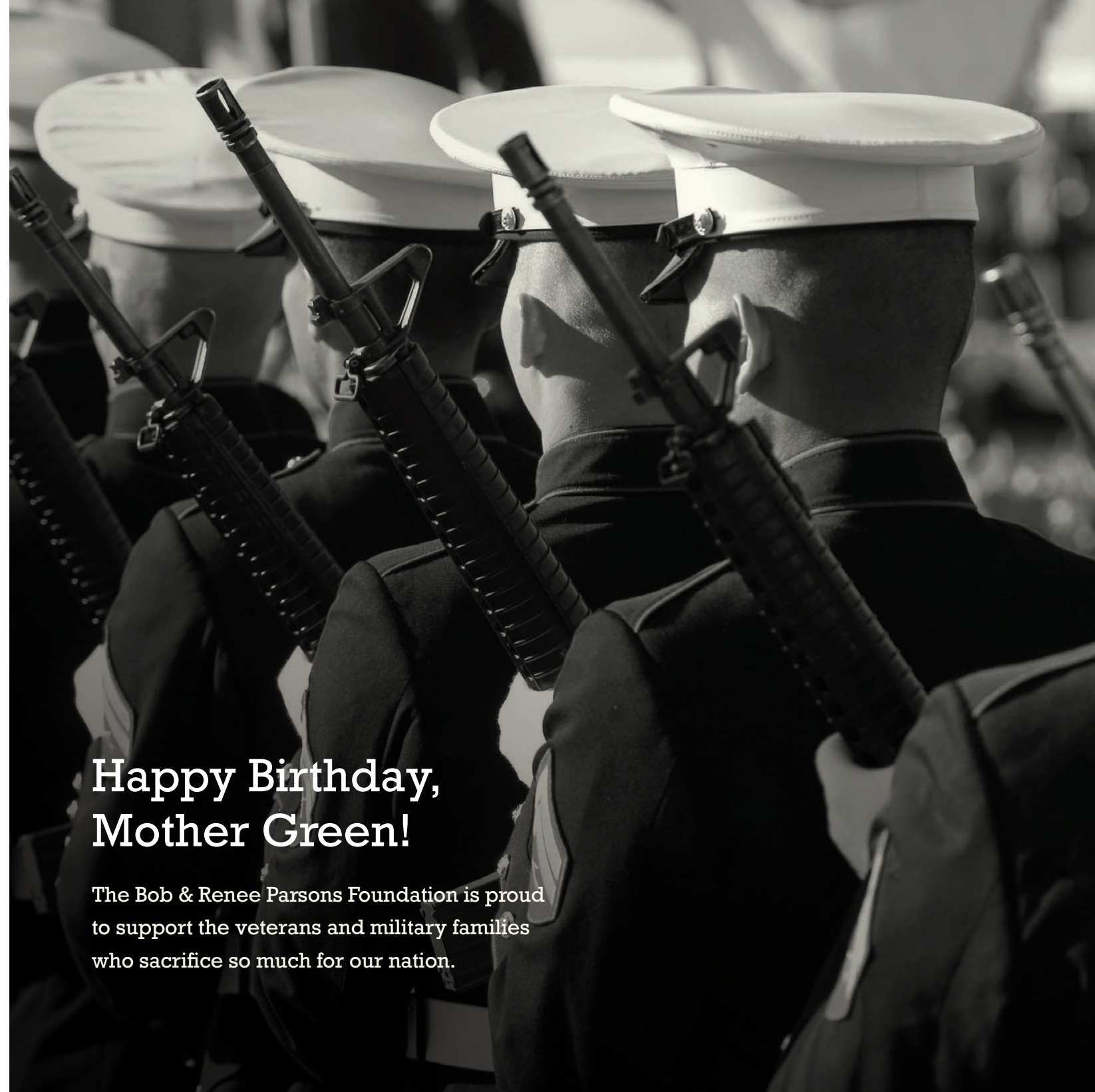
He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a dual degree in Business and Political Science and played four years of varsity football for the Badgers.

**J**ake Wood is the founder and CEO of Groundswell, a financial technology company sitting at the intersection of philanthropy, employee compensation, and corporate social responsibility.

Prior to launching Groundswell, Wood served as the founder and CEO of Team Rubicon, a disaster response organization that is widely considered one of America's leading nonprofits. Since 2010, Team Rubicon has recruited over 150,000 volunteers and responded to nearly 1,000 disasters and humanitarian crises.



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**SCENES FROM THE 2022 THE NEW YORK CITY  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY GALA  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WENDY MOGER-BROSS**



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**SCENES FROM THE 2022 THE NEW YORK CITY  
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY WENDY MOGER-BROSS**



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