



News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge
19th Judicial Circuit
Lake County
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Waukegan, Illinois

5th ANNUAL VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT PLANNED FOR NOVEMBER 11, 2016

Chief Judge Jorge L. Ortiz announced that Lake County's 19th Judicial Circuit, various partners of the Lake County legal community and the County of Lake will participate together in the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. On Veterans Day morning, Friday, November 11, 2016, veterans are invited to come to the Lake County courthouse in Waukegan to give their oral histories, which will be transcribed by licensed court reporters and archived at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The program has been presented in the courthouse since 2012 and is a moving and inspirational experience for all who attend.

The Veterans Day event begins with breakfast and a program of welcome in the atrium of the County Building. The legendary Honorable William J. Bauer, Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, himself a WW II veteran, will be the guest of honor at the event. After a brief program including breakfast and a group photo, the veterans registered for the event will tell their story with the assistance of volunteer interviewers and licensed court reporters.

The Library of Congress sponsored project collects first-hand accounts of veterans from World War II (1939-1946), the Korean War (1950-1955), the Vietnam War (1961-1975), the Persian Gulf War (1990-1995) and the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present), as well as personal items such as photographs, diaries, letters, etc. of the veterans, if they so choose. Civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts (war industry workers, such as "Rosie the Riveter," USO workers, civilian flight instructors and pilots, medical personnel, etc.) are also invited to share their valuable stories.

Chief Judge Ortiz said, “We are seeking veterans who were on active duty during the times our country has been involved in armed conflict. The veterans need not have been involved directly in combat themselves. While veterans are often hesitant to talk about their own experiences because of a sense of humility, they are often the last witnesses to the sacrifices and bravery of others who did not survive the war or have since passed. The events they witnessed and their memories of their comrades in arms must be preserved.”

Volunteers from the Office of the State’s Attorney, the Public Defender’s Office and members of the Lake County Bar Association will conduct the oral interviews. The Lake County Sheriff’s Office, Tri-County Marine Corps League, the Young Marines and other groups participate in the event. Rose Gray and Robyn McGarrigle of the Lake County Probation Department donate a Quilt of Valor to be signed by all the veterans present. Judges Michael Betar (USMC), Michael Fusz (USN) and John Scully (USN) of the 19th Judicial Circuit are co-chairing the event.

Court reporters Deborah Cohen-Rojas and Colleen Eitermann will be coordinating the court reporters’ support of this important project. “The official court reporters covering this year’s Lake County’s Veterans History Project event are again very excited to be a part of this effort. The first-hand accounts will be archived in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress for electronic search by researchers and to serve as an inspiration for generations to come, making accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war,” said Ms. Cohen-Rojas.

Any veteran interested should call Carol Cord, the administrative assistant to Chief Judge Ortiz and the mother of two war-time veterans, who can be reached at ccord@lakecountyl.gov or 847-377-3771 by September 15, 2016. For more information, see <http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/>

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