



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 on Veterans Day, Lake County's 19th Judicial Circuit Court, various partners of the Lake County legal community and the County of Lake will again participate in the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. At 9:00 am on Friday, November 11, 2016, approximately 35 veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and more recent conflicts will meet at the Lake County Courthouse to give oral histories of their wartime experiences. This year, at least nine World War II veterans are expected including participants in Atlantic convoy duty, Pacific naval battles, the land and air campaigns to liberate Europe, including a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, the land battle for the Philippines and Occupation efforts immediately following surrender.

Chief Judge Ortiz said: "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. It is absolutely crucial that the events they witnessed and their memories of their comrades-in-arms be preserved."

Court reporters Deborah Cohen-Rojas and Colleen Eitermann will be coordinating the court reporters' support of this important project. "Both the official and free-lance 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. These personal accounts of American war veterans will be electronically accessible by researchers and the public so that future generations may hear directly from our veterans and better understand the realities of war," said Ms. Cohen-Rojas.

The Veterans Day event begins with a full chow hall breakfast for the veterans and family members including the traditional military favorite, “chipped beef on toast.” Lake Forest High School senior Jane Margolis, an accomplished young vocalist, will open the program by singing the National Anthem. A brief program of welcome will follow with remarks by guest of honor and WW II veteran, the legendary Honorable William J. Bauer, Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit. The program will then conclude with a rendition of “God Bless America” by Ms. Margolis, a group photo and the interviews will then commence in the courthouse.

In addition to volunteers and interviewers from the State’s Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office and the Lake County Bar Association; the Lake County Sheriff’s Office, the Tri-County Marine Corps League, the Young Marines, Lake County Bar Foundation, the North Shore chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and other community groups will participate in and support the event. Rose Gray and Robyn McGarrigle of the Lake County Probation Department have donated a Quilt of Valor to be signed by all the veterans present.

Attorney Tom Sbertoli of Riewer & Collins, LLC, and a Marine Corp Vietnam combat veteran who has interviewed veterans for the past four years said: “We should all be aware that we are losing our older veterans at a very high rate. The Veterans History Project focuses attention on these patriots, ordinary men and women, who gave up a lot when their help was needed. The entire county should be proud of this event.”

Judges Michael Betar (USMC), Michael Fusz (USN) and John Scully (USN) of the 19th Judicial Circuit are co-chairing the event. For more information, see <http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/> or call Carol Cord, the administrative assistant to Chief Judge Ortiz, herself the mother of two veterans. Ms. Cord can be reached at ccord@lakecountyil.gov or 847-377-3771.

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