

BIOGRAPHIES

Meeting of the Research Advisory Committee on Veterans' Gulf War Illnesses

RAC-GWVI

June 11 and 12, 2019

RAC-GWVI LEADERSHIP

Lawrence Steinman, M.D. Dr. Lawrence Steinman, RAC-GWVI Chair, received his BA in physics from Dartmouth College, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1968, and graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1973. He did an internship and residency in neurology at Stanford University and from 1974 to 1977 and was a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Chemical Immunology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, receiving an NIH post-doctoral Fellowship. Dr. Steinman is Board Certified in Neurology and Psychiatry, is Senior Attending Physician at Stanford's Hospitals, the Zimmerman Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology, and from 2002 to 2011 he served as Chairman of the Interdepartmental Immunology Program. He received teaching awards during this time, particularly for his course on the Brain and the Immune System. He served in 2014–2015 on the Institute of Medicine–National Academy of Science panel on Considerations for Designing an Epidemiologic Study for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Other Neurologic Disorders in Pre and Post 9/11 Gulf War Veterans. Dr. Steinman received numerous honors: From 1988 to 2002 he twice received the Senator Jacob Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award from the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke. In 1994, he won the Friedrich Sasse Prize from the Free University of Berlin. In 2004, he won the John Dystel Prize from the American Academy of Neurology and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. In 2008, he received an Honorary Doctorate from Hasselt University. In 2009, he was elected to the Institute of Medicine, now called the National Academy of Medicine. In 2011, Dr. Steinman won the Charcot Prize for Lifetime Achievement in MS research from the International Federation of MS Societies. In 2015, he received the Cerami Award in Translational Medicine. In 2017, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science. In 2015, he became the first neuroimmunologist elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Steinman's research focuses on what provokes relapses and remission in multiple sclerosis, the nature of the molecules that serve as a brake on the brain inflammation, and the quest for a tolerizing vaccine for autoimmune diseases like type 1 diabetes and neuromyelitis optica. He has developed two antigen-specific therapies, using DNA vaccines, for MS and type 1 diabetes. He was senior author on the seminal 1992 *Nature* article that reported the key role of a particular integrin in brain inflammation. This research led to the development of the drug Tysabri, which is used to treat patients with MS and Crohn's disease. Dr. Steinman holds patents in the areas of immunology and for therapies of Huntington Disease, type 1 diabetes, and MS. He cofounded Neurocrine Biosciences, Bayhill Therapeutics now named Tolerion, Nuon Therapeutics, Transparency Life Sciences, and Atreca.

Karen Block, Ph.D. Dr. Karen Block, RAC-GWVI Designated Federal Officer (DFO), is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in the field of molecular mechanisms driving human disease with focus on the role of oxidative stress in carcinogenesis, cancer-drug resistance, and diabetes-induced organ damage. Academically, Dr. Block was an Associate Professor of Medicine who served as an Executive member of the Cancer Therapy and Research Center and Associate Director of Shared Resources at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and was a health research scientist with the VA since 2005. Her career is balanced with solid independent National Institutes of Health and VA funding achievements, publication of scientific manuscripts in high impact factor journals, authorship of expert review articles and book chapters, participation in and chairing of grant reviews and University programs as well as steering committees, and performance of site visits in addition to training clinician- and non-clinician-scientists. She joined the Office of Research and Development in Washington D.C. in 2016.

Marsha Turner, M.S.Ed. Marsha Turner, RAC-GWVI Acting Managing Director and Alternate Designated Federal Officer, has extensive experience in clinical and coordinated research initiatives with career focus on chronic unexplained medical conditions and stress-related disorders. Ms. Turner is

currently working with the Gulf War Research Resource at the Cooperative Studies and Epidemiology Center (CSPEC) in Durham, North Carolina. Marsha has coordinated research initiatives for the VA since 2011. She also has strong interest in complementary and alternative medicine and developing technology for performance enhancement and improving health conditions.

RAC-GWVI MEETING PRESENTERS

Erin Dursa, Ph.D. Dr Erin Dursa is a senior epidemiologist in Post Deployment Health Services at the Department of Veterans Affairs. She received her Master's in Public Health in epidemiology from the Yale School of Public Health and her Ph.D. in epidemiology from the Tulane School of Public Health. She has spent her entire career at the Department of Veterans Affairs, beginning as a biostatistician in the Cooperative Studies Program and then as an HIV epidemiologist before joining the Post Deployment Health Service in 2011. Her work focuses on the health effects of service in the 1990–1991 Gulf War, with a special interest in Gulf War illness. She has published widely in this area and recently won the editor's award for her publication "Gulf War Illness in the 1991 Gulf War and Gulf Era Veteran Population: An Application of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kansas Case Definitions to Historical Data".

Kenneth S. Ramos, M.D., Ph.D. Dr. Kenneth Ramos is an accomplished physician-scientist and transformational leader, with designation in the prestigious National Academy of Medicine. He is recognized throughout the world for his scientific contributions in the areas of genomics, precision medicine, and toxicology. Dr. Ramos is the Professor of Medicine and Alkek Chair of Medical Genetics, Texas A&M University College of Medicine; Director, Institute of Biosciences and Technology; Associate Vice President for Research, Texas A&M University Health Science Center; and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health Services, Texas A&M University System. Dr. Ramos' research integrates diverse approaches to elucidate genetic and genomic mechanisms of human disease. His work focuses on the study of repetitive sequences and their role in human disease and builds on seminal discoveries by his research group that defined epigenetic mechanisms of retrotransposon reactivation by biological, chemical and physical carcinogens. These early discoveries opened the door for ground breaking research on long interspersed nuclear elements-1 (LINE-1) retroelements and their role as jumping genes, chromatin remodeling agents, and regulators of DNA repair. With formal training in pharmaceutical sciences, chemistry, biochemistry, pharmacology, and medicine, Dr. Ramos is helping to steer the changing landscape of medicine, biotechnology, and healthcare. He has published over 500 peer-reviewed manuscripts and abstracts in high-impact journals such as Blood, Cancer Research, Circulation Research, Nature: Genomic Medicine, Molecular Oncology, Nucleic Acids Research, Oncogene, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Peter D. Rumm, M.D., M.P.H., FACPM. Dr. Peter Rumm serves as the Director of Pre-911 Era Environmental Health Services in VA Post-Deployment Health Services where he oversees several complex national programs dealing with environmental issue for Veterans. In 2017 he was selected for a very competitive Leadership VA training and then served on the Board of Directors of the LVA alumni association for a year as its communication lead. Dr. Rumm is a pediatrician and board-certified preventive medicine physician. He came to VA from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) where he held senior positions including as Deputy Director, DSORD — a large medical device review division. Dr. Rumm graduated from the Medical College of Georgia and received a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Washington. He is a Fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM). He has served in leadership positions for ACPM, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Association of Public Health Physicians (AAPHP). Dr. Rumm also attained Advanced Standing in the American College of Physician Executives. Dr. Rumm was formerly the State of Wisconsin, Chief Medical Officer and Epidemiologist, Division of Public Health. He served as an Associate Professor, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Director, Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication, Drexel School of Public Health, Philadelphia. While at

Drexel, Dr. Rumm served on the Board of Directors of the regional Mercy Health Care System. He has served on other boards including the National Advisory Committee on Children and Terrorism, the Wisconsin Patient Safety Foundation, The Tropical Medicine Society of Baltimore, and Rotary International (Chapter President).

James N. Woody, M.D., Ph.D. Dr. James Woody is currently a General Partner at Latterell Venture Partners, a biotechnology venture capital firm in the San Francisco area. He brings more than 25 years of pharmaceutical research and management experience to LVP. Dr. Woody is also currently chairman of Viracta Therapeutics, a company focusing on unique therapies for virally induced cancers. He was founding CEO of Oncomed Pharmaceuticals. He was formerly President and General Manager of Roche Bioscience (former Syntex) in Palo Alto, California, where he had responsibility for all bioscience research and development, ranging from genetics and genomics to clinical development of numerous new pharmaceuticals. Previously, he served as Chief Scientific Officer and Senior Vice President of Research and Development for Centocor, where he was responsible for the discovery and early clinical development of antibody and peptide-based therapeutic products. While at Centocor, Dr. Woody, along with colleagues, developed Remicade, the first of the tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitor biologics, that benefited patients with rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, and psoriasis. He also helped develop ReoPro, a novel platelet blocking drug used in conjunction with angioplasty. Prior to Centocor, Woody served as Commanding Officer and Director, U.S. Naval Medical Research and Development Command in Bethesda Maryland. In that role, he was responsible for a wide range of medical research and development activities ranging from transplantation research to infectious diseases. He was responsible for the surveillance, detection, and therapy for all Biologic Warfare Agents and Infectious Diseases in the first Gulf War, and he was awarded the U.S. Navy Legion of Merit for his service. In previous years, as a Navy Medical Officer, Woody served as Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit- No. 3 (NAMRU), the U.S. Navy's biocontainment level 4 facility in Cairo, Egypt, doing infectious disease surveillance over the eastern Mediterranean area, including serving as the World Health Organization HIV Reference Center and training facility for the area. During his Navy career, James Woody and his colleagues in the U.S. Navy, as part of their radiation injury and transplantation research, started the "National Marrow Donor Program", which has been successful in assisting over 80,000 patients in need of matched marrow transplant donors. Dr. Woody previously served as Chairman of the Board of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital (Stanford). He chairs the LPCH Quality, Service, and Safety Committee. James Woody holds an M.D. from Loma Linda University, trained in Pediatric Immunology at Duke University and Children's Hospital in Boston (Harvard), and holds a Ph.D. in Immunology from the University of London, England. He was Professor of Pediatrics and Microbiology at Georgetown University School of Medicine 1982–1996. Dr. Woody has authored or co-authored over 140 publications.

RAC-GWVI SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS AND MEETING ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Kimberly M. Adams, J.D. Ms. Adams, Committee Member for RAC-GWVI, is an Air Force Veteran, former health care provider and staunch legal advocate for veterans and their families. She became a Certified Respiratory Therapist in 2005 and worked in a number of hospitals. Ms. Adams then earned her B.S. in Women and Gender Studies (Summa Cum Laude) from the State University of New York, College at Brockport in 2008 and J.D. from Wayne State University Law School in 2013. She was selected as an Equal Justice Works Legal Fellow in 2013 and developed the "Boots on the Ground" Veterans Justice Project for Community Legal Aid Services in Akron, OH. After her fellowship ended in 2015, she had the opportunity to continue her veterans legal and support work as a Veterans Legal Advocate with the same organization. Our Veterans Legal Team advocates for and empowers Central NE Ohio veterans to build stable and productive lives. She also works with Veterans Support agencies, Veterans Service Organizations as well as Veterans Treatment Courts in Central NE Ohio to collaborate and arrange access to legal services for Veterans and their families.

Brent L. Casey. Mr. Casey, Committee Member for RAC-GWVI, served as a combat medic with the 82nd Airborne Division in the Persian Gulf in 1990-1991. As a Gulf War Veteran, he has spent many years contributing personal experience, diverse perspectives, and expertise to several organizations. Mr. Casey has participated as an invited speaker for several venues, served as a Consumer Reviewer with the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, and sits, or has sat, on the board of directors for Dogs Helping Heroes, the National Gulf War Resource Center, National Desert Storm War Memorial, and Student Veterans of America, Chapter 227 at Sullivan University. Mr. Casey graduated summa cum laude from Sullivan University with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Business Management and is continuing his education as a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree in Strategic Management at Sullivan University.

Maryllyn R. Harris, R.N. Ms. Harris, Committee Member for RAC-GWVI, is a Gulf War Veteran, a former Army Nurse, and a longtime advocate of Veterans and Military Families. Ms. Harris is an Adjunct Clinical Faculty in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing at the University of St. Thomas Peavy School of Nursing. Ms. Harris was the 2014 University of Texas - Houston School of Nursing "Distinguished Nurse Alumni." She has a clinical background that extends over three decades, has been involved in numerous research studies, clinical trials and Veteran programs and projects, and teaches entrepreneurship in the international *Boots to Business Program* hosted by the U S Small Business Administration and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University. Ms. Harris currently serves as Senior Consultant for Harmland Healthcare Consulting and as Executive Director of the Women Veterans Business Center, both in Houston, TX. Ms. Harris was recently honored as a 2014 "Woman *Vetpreneur* of the Year (Finalist)" by the National of Veteran Owned Businesses. In 2013, Ms. Harris was recognized by President Obama as a White House "*Champion of Change*" and by the Small Business Administration (Region VI) as the "*Veteran Business Champion of the Year.*"

Drew Helmer, M.D., M.S. Dr. Drew Helmer, Director, War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, VA New Jersey, is an expert in post-deployment health, the impact of combat deployment on the health and well-being of military service members. He obtained his medical degree at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and his Masters of Science in Health Policy and Management at the Columbia University School of Public Health. Trained as a general internist, from 2001–2007, Dr. Helmer was the medical director at the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC—pronounced "risk") and a VA Health Services Research and Development Career Development Awardee while at VA New Jersey Health Care System. From 2007–2011, Dr. Helmer worked at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, Texas, where he was the lead clinician for Post-Deployment Health in Houston and for the South Central Veterans Integrated Service Network, Associate Director of Research for PrimeCare, and Assistant Director of the "Neurorehabilitation: Neurons to Networks" VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Traumatic Brain Injury Research Center of Excellence. He has been the Director of the WRIISC at the VA New Jersey Health Care System and Associate Professor of Medicine at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Jersey Medical School since December 2011. In addition to caring for Veterans and educating providers about post-deployment health, Dr. Helmer studies healthcare utilization and outcomes important to deployed Veterans including chronic pain, exposure concerns, depression and suicidal ideation, mild traumatic brain injury, and sexual health concerns. He has published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles and a book for a lay audience on these topics.

Stephen Hunt, M.D. Dr. Stephen Hunt, National Director of the Veterans Health Administration Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative, provides national leadership in support of integrated post-combat care clinics in VA medical centers. For over three decades he has provided care for and conducted clinical research on combat veterans from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War (Desert Shield/Desert Storm), and the Iraq and Afghanistan Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and New Dawn (OND) conflicts. His Gulf War Veterans Clinic at VA Puget Sound, established in 1994, was designated as the best practices approach to clinical care for Desert Shield/Desert Storm

Veterans and was featured frequently in presentations to groups such as the Institute of Medicine, RAND Corporation, Research Advisory Committee, and various Congressional groups and committees. This clinic was later adapted and renamed the Deployment Health Clinic, to provide care and support for Veterans returning from the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts. Designated as best practices approach to post-deployment care, this model was rolled out in 2008 as the VA Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative. Within 18 months, 84% of VA facilities had integrated care platforms for Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Dr. Hunt is the Registry Physician at VA Puget Sound, providing evaluations and care for Veterans with exposures to Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and other toxic environmental agents related to military service. He is involved in clinical care, research, education, and outreach related to health concerns of combat veterans locally, state-wide, and at the national level. Dr. Hunt is a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Washington School of Medicine in the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Program.

William “Bill” A. Watts. Mr. Bill Watts, Subcommittee Member for the RAC-GWVI, is a Gulf War Combat Veteran who deployed with the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, 1st Cavalary Division, during the Gulf War and liberation of Kuwait. Mr. Watts lives in Doral, Florida, and was appointed by the Mayor and City Council to serve as the Vice-Chair on the City of Doral’s Military Advisory Committee. Watts is the Director of Operations for *Fishing with America’s Finest* a non-profit group that works with Veterans suffering from PTSD, physical, or other mental disabilities. He participates in Research performed by the Miami VA Medical Center to improve the health of Gulf War Veterans and was chosen to be a Military Consumer Reviewer for the Washington, DC, Gulf War Illness Research Program (GWIRP).

VA LEADERSHIP

Robert Wilkie, Secretary VA. The Honorable Robert Wilkie was nominated by President Trump to serve as the tenth Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He was confirmed by the United States Senate on July 23, 2018, and sworn in on July 30, 2018. Mr. Wilkie previously served as the acting Secretary of VA from March 28 to May 29, 2018. Before confirmation as VA Secretary, Mr. Wilkie served Secretary James Mattis as his Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness—the principal advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense for Total Force Management as it relates to readiness, National Guard and Reserve component affairs, health affairs, training, and personnel requirements and management, including equal opportunity, morale, welfare, recreation, and the quality of life for military families. The son of an Army artillery commander, Mr. Wilkie spent his youth at Fort Bragg. Today, he is an officer in the United States Air Force Reserve assigned to the Office of the Chief of Staff. Before joining the Air Force, he served in the United States Navy Reserve with the Joint Forces Intelligence Command, Naval Special Warfare Group Two, and the Office of Naval Intelligence. Mr. Wilkie has more than 20 years of federal service at the national and international levels. During the George W. Bush Administration, Mr. Wilkie served both Robert Gates and Donald Rumsfeld as Assistant Secretary of Defense from 2005–2009, and he was the youngest senior leader in the Department. Mr. Wilkie was Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and a senior director of the National Security Council under Dr. Condoleezza Rice. He also has extensive experience in the United States Congress, including recent service as Senior Advisor to Senator Thom Tillis and service as Counsel and Advisor on International Security Affairs to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Honorable Trent Lott. Mr. Wilkie shepherded the Senate confirmation process for James Mattis, Robert Gates, and Admiral Mike Mullen (CJCS), and he was responsible for the preparation of General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Croker for their multiple appearances before the Congress in defense of the Iraqi Surge. Mr. Wilkie was Vice President for Strategic Programs for CH2M HILL, one of the world’s largest engineering and program management firms, where for five years he held program management and advisory assignments as diverse as the London 2012 Summer Olympics and the reform and reorganization of the United Kingdom Ministry of Defense Supply and Logistics System (DE&S).

Mr. Wilkie holds an Honors degree from Wake Forest University, a Juris Doctor from Loyola University College of Law in New Orleans, a Master of Laws in International and Comparative Law from Georgetown University, and a Masters in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College. A graduate of the College of Naval Command and Staff, Air Command and Staff College, the United States Army War College, and the Joint Forces Staff College, Mr. Wilkie has published articles in the Naval War College Review, Parameters, Armed Forces Journal International, Air and Space Power Journal, and Proceedings. He holds personal and unit decorations, as well as the Defense Distinguished Public Service Medal, the highest non-career civilian award of the Department.

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