

BIOGRAPHIES

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

September 21 and 22, 2022

RACGWVI LEADERSHIP

CHAIR: Lawrence Steinman, M.D., Board-certified physician in Neurology and Psychiatry at Stanford's Hospitals and the Zimmerman Professor of Pediatrics, Neurology, and Genetics. Dr. Steinman's scientific career is demonstrated by over 38 patents and 562 peer review publications in high impact factor journals. Over his tenure, he has served as editor of stellar journals, including currently, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Steinman has received numerous prizes and lifetime achievements, Nationally and Internationally. He was the first neuroimmunologist elected to the National Academy of Sciences where he has contributed to Neurologic Disorders in Veterans of the Persian Gulf & Post-9/11 Wars.

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Karen Block, Ph.D., Senior Program Manager Gulf War Research VHA Office of Research & Development

Dr. Karen Block 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.

Managing Director / Alternate DFO Marsha Turner, M.S.

Marsha Turner has extensive experience in clinical research initiatives with career focus on chronic and unexplained medical conditions. Ms. Turner has coordinated research initiatives within the VA since 2011 and was previously the National Gulf War Program Manager stationed at the Gulf War Research Resource within the Cooperative Studies and Epidemiology Center (CSPEC) in Durham, North Carolina. Prior to working with the VA, she coordinated research for the UNC Center for Functional GI & Motility Disorders at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ms. Turner has a strong interest in improving quality of life for Veterans and their families living with multiple and debilitating health conditions.

RACGWVI Members:

James N. Baraniuk, M.D., Board-certified physician and Professor of Rheumatology, Immunology, and Allergy and the Director, Bioassay Core, Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center at Georgetown University.

Dr. Baraniuk is a national and international leader of Gulf War Illness, chronic fatigue syndrome, and fibromyalgia with emphasis on pain and neuropathological dysfunction as displayed, in part, by over 170 peer-reviewed manuscripts, solid federal funding, and expert panels he serves, including the high-level distinct panel of Gulf War Illness, Desert Storm after 25 years, co-hosted by the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence Brookings. Dr. Baraniuk has established large clinical research databases and biorepositories using multiple big data approaches. Together, his laboratory and collaborative team are using these tools to dissect clinical phenotypes and pathophysiological mechanisms of chronic fatigue syndrome in Veterans with Gulf War Illness distinct from control subjects.

Ronald Brown

Is an honorably discharged U.S. Army Gulf War Veteran, having served in the U.S. Army from 1989-1992 in the 82nd Airborne Division. He is an active advocate for Gulf War Veterans' issues and currently works with Vietnam Veterans of America in Silver Spring, MD as a Toxic Wounds Consultant. He also works with the U.S. Department of Defense, Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) at Ft. Detrick, MD. Some of Mr. Brown's other Gulf War advocacy includes service as president of the National Gulf War Resource Center (NGWRC) that specializes in Gulf War Illness claims, working with Veterans to educate and assist them in the claims process. Mr. Brown's Gulf War Illness experience includes working with senior Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) leadership to address issues Gulf War Veterans face with each agency. He has worked directly with two VA Secretaries, Robert McDonald and Dr. David Shulkin, on adding brain cancer as a presumptive condition for Gulf War Veterans based upon VA's own research; worked to educate Gulf War Veterans on understanding the evidence and documentation needed to file for VA compensation claims related to their service, and worked directly with VA's Compensation Service helping to alleviate and prevent any mistakes occurring at the Veterans Benefits Administration regarding Gulf War Veterans claims. He has worked with two different DoD Under Secretaries of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to address chemical weapons exposure during Desert Storm, served as a consumer reviewer on DoD scientific merit peer review panels related to Gulf War Illness, burn pits exposure, and metals toxicology and participated in biweekly meetings with VA's Office of Public Health to discuss Gulf War research.

Brent L. Casey, MBA

Mr. Casey 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.

Richard Gaard, Col. (Ret.)

Colonel Richard Gaard is a Veteran of 35 years in the Army Reserve and a graduate of the Command & General Staff College. Colonel Gaard's most recent assignment was serving as Deputy Legislative Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon. During this time, Colonel Gaard had many experiences working with various Congressional staffs on Veteran issues. Upon retirement from the Pentagon, the Chairman challenged Colonel Gaard to keep advocating for the rights of our Veterans back home. He has been doing just that with many activities! Throughout Colonel Gaard's military career, he has had various assignments in Japan, Belgium, and Germany besides stateside. He was chosen one of seven American officers to coordinate the 29 Country Multi-National Peace-Making Exercise at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany. Colonel Gaard continues to serve West Point Academy as the State Liaison Officer Director of the Iowa Field Force. Colonel Gaard has been an educator/coach for many years with B.A. in Business from Wartburg College, MA from University of Northern Iowa, Educational Administration from Truman State University and MBA studies from University of Melbourne, Australia. As Chairman of the Park and Recreation Board in his hometown, he has recently been working with Veterans and city officials to establish a memorial for Veterans in northeast Iowa. It is truly an honor to serve on this committee to keep working on protecting and helping our Veterans.

Drew A. Helmer, M.D., MS, Deputy Director of the Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness, and Safety (IQuEST) at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston, TX. Dr. Helmer obtained his medical degree at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and his Master of Science in Health Policy and Management at the Columbia University School of Public Health. Dr. Helmer is an expert in deployment-related health concerns, the impact of combat deployment on the health and well-being of military service members. Previously, he was the Director of the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) at the VA-New Jersey Health Care System and Associate Professor of Medicine at Rutgers University-New Jersey Medical School. 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 80 peer-reviewed articles and a book for a lay audience on these topics.

Tom Mathers, Capt. U.S. Army, 1990-91 Gulf War Veteran.

Mr. Tom Mathers is the co-founder of Allievex Corp. and serves as its President and CEO, and director. Mr. Mathers is also a partner at Pappas Capital, a dedicated life science venture capital firm focused exclusively on investing in the life sciences sector, where he focuses primarily on company formation. From 1988 to 1991, Tom served as a captain in the United States Army and

was awarded several medals for his services as an AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot in the 1990-91 Gulf War. He attended the United States Military Academy at West Point earning a BS degree in Engineering. Prior to Pappas Capital and Allievex, Tom was the President and CEO of CoLucid Pharmaceuticals, Inc., which focused on the development of the drug lasmiditan which is used for the acute treatment of migraines. Prior to CoLucid, Tom was President and CEO of Peptimmune, Inc.; President and CEO of Cell Based Delivery, Inc.; Vice President and General Manager of Cardion AG and Vice President of Strategic Development at Genzyme Corporation. Tom currently serves on the board of directors for the Biotechnology Industry Organization, where he is active in the areas of capital formation, bioethics, intellectual property and regulatory policy. He also serves as a business advisor to the Progeria Research Foundation and the DADA2 Foundation.

Delphine Metcalf-Foster, 1st Sgt. U.S. Army (Ret.) 1990-91 Gulf War Veteran.

Ms. Delphine Metcalf-Foster, a U.S. Army Desert Storm/Desert Shield disabled Veteran, was elected as National Commander for the more than 1 million-member DAV in 2017. The Vallejo, California native's military career included service with the U.S. Army Reserve, 689th Quartermaster Unit, 6253rd Hospital Unit and 6211th Transportation Unit, Letterman Army Medical Center. She retired from the Army Reserves with the rank of first sergeant and from the Department of Defense as a Quality Assurance Work Leader in 1996. PNC Metcalf-Foster is a life member of Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. She currently serves on the First Serve Military Advisory Council and is a member of the DAV Department of California Claims and Service Committee and Northern California VA Healthcare Advisory Board. PNC Metcalf-Foster also completed a four-year appointment as a member of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in November 2015. For the last six years, she has also been a member of Congressman Mike Thompson's Veterans Advisory Committee. Aside from her commitments on the state and national level, PNC Metcalf-Foster holds a Board position with the Solano County Habitat for Humanity and is on the Veterans Advisory Council for Sonoma State University. A graduate of Solano Community College and Sonoma State University, PNC Metcalf-Foster majored in psychology and liberal studies. She currently resides in Vallejo, California, and is the mother of three children, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren

Carey Pope, Ph.D.

Dr. Pope has a Ph.D. in Pharmacology/Toxicology, is Regents Professor and Sitlington Endowed Chair in Toxicology, and is Director of the Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program at Oklahoma State University–Stillwater. He has served as past President for the International Neurotoxicology Association, the South Central Chapter of the Society of Toxicology, and the Neurotoxicology Section of the Society of Toxicology. Dr. Pope is a current member of a number of scientific societies and is an associate editor or board member for nine toxicology and pharmacology journals. Dr. Pope's research interests focus on the effects of xenobiotics, in particular organophosphorus chemicals, on neurological function using biochemical, neurobehavioral, and analytical chemistry approaches. These efforts have led to over 230 published peer-reviewed abstracts, manuscripts, and book chapters in addition to invited speaker requests and participation on advisory panels both nationally and internationally.

Sonya L. Smith

Sonya Smith is an honorably discharged Veteran of the U.S. Air Force Reserve, health care professional and Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services where she works closely with the local VA Medical Center and Benefits Office to maintain open communication, collaborate, and problem-solve on the issues and challenges in the New Mexico Veteran community. In the 1990-91 Gulf War she served as a medical technician in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Ms. Smith's background also includes work at the New Mexico Department of Health as a special projects coordinator, specifically helping guide the efforts of the agency's COVID-19 testing team. Prior to that, she served as director of compliance and primary care programs at Southwest Care Center in Santa Fe, and before that she worked as the clinical compliance manager at the University of New Mexico Truman Health Services clinic. Smith earned a bachelor's degree in health services management from Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia.

Elaine Symanski, MSPH, Ph.D., Professor in the Center for Precision Environmental Health and Department of Medicine, Section of Epidemiology and Population Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), Director of the BCM Program in Population and Environmental Health Disparities.

Dr. Elaine Symanski earned her MSPH and Ph.D. degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is also PI of an NIH P50 Center of Excellence on Environmental Health Disparities Research, The Maternal and Infant Environmental Riskscape (MIEHR) Center, and serves as Deputy Director of a NIEHS P30 Environmental Health Sciences Core Center, The Gulf Coast Center for Precision Environmental Health (GC-CPEH). With training in epidemiology and environmental sciences, Dr. Symanski's research focuses on investigations of the independent and interacting effects of exposures to chemical and non-chemical stressors on health, particularly among vulnerable populations. Previously, she served on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) committees to investigate respiratory health effects of airborne hazards exposures in the Southeast Asia theater of military operations (2019-2020) and assess potential health effects associated with contaminated drinking water at Camp Lejeune (2007-2009). Dr. Symanski also participated during 2020-2021 as a subgroup (Exposure Characterization) Co-Chair of the Working Group for the IARC Monograph on the Evaluation of Cobalt metal (without tungsten carbide or other metal alloys) and cobalt (II) salts Trivalent and pentavalent antimony; and weapons-grade tungsten (with nickel and cobalt) alloy and as a member in 2017-2018 of the Working Group for the IARC Monograph on the Carcinogenic Risks to Humans – Volume 120 (Benzene).

Ms. Barbara A. Ward, BSN, MPA

Ms. Ward is the former Director of the Center for Minority Veterans, Department of Veterans Affairs and current CEO of Ward and Associates, LLC. She is also an air force nurse who served during the Vietnam Era. Upon her retirement from federal service in 2018, her 47-year professional career included numerous senior executive level positions in the health care industry, state and federal government. She has worked as an Assistant Hospital Administrator, Vice President of Medical Services, Regional Director of Field Case Management and held

several Director positions in state and federal government. As the former Director of the Center for Minority Veterans, she served as an advisor to the VA Secretary on the needs of minority Veterans and was the designated federal officer for the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. Additionally, Ms. Ward developed successful programs that specifically targeted outreach to over 5 million minority Veterans nationwide to increase utilization of VA benefits. Prior to this position, Ms. Ward served as the Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans for the State of California. Barbara is an adjunct faculty member at Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California. Barbara obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Tallahassee, Florida and her master's degree in Public Administration, Health Services Management, from Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California.

Jane M. Wasvick, RN, BSN, MSA

Ms. Wasvick spent 45 years in healthcare occupying varying roles in a multi-site healthcare system then became Director of Patient Care in a resort community. Subsequently, she held the position of Vice President of Patient Care and Quality in a Critical Access Hospital. As a surveyor for the Joint Commission, Jane led VA team projects geared toward improving surveying efforts at the VA. She is currently retired, but maintains her RN, MSA license in Minnesota.

William "Bill" A. Watts

Mr. Watts is a decorated Gulf War Combat Veteran who deployed with the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, during the 1990-1991 Gulf War and liberation of Kuwait. He holds many distinguished awards including the Florida Senate Veterans Champion Award and was honored by Congress with the Congressional Veterans Commendation Award. He continues to serve his Gulf War community locally and nationally through his leadership volunteer roles on the local Senate Veterans Committee; is a founding member of Vet Info, a non-profit group which provides information, advocacy, and education for Veterans of all eras and conflicts. Using his knowledge of fishing, Bill helps Veterans who are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other disabilities by using piscatorial (fishing) therapy, an evidence-based research trial to support Gulf War Veterans with illnesses, and Gulf War Veteran-subject matter expert reviewer for the DoD Gulf War Illness research program (GWIRP). Mr. Watts was appointed by the Mayor and Council of Doral, FL, to serve on the Doral Military Advisory Committee and is recognized by Miami-Dade County and the City of Doral Florida, where he currently lives, for his work with Veterans. In honor of his continued dedication to supporting his fellow Veterans, the city commissioners of the City of Fort Lauderdale, FL proclaimed Saturday, June 11, 2022, as William "Bill" Watts Day.

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.

Invited Guests

Kenneth Ramos, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Translational Medical Sciences, Alkek Chair of Medical Genetics, Executive Director, Institute of Biosciences and Technology, Associate Vice President for Research and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health Services at Texas A&M University System.

Dr. Kenneth Ramos is an accomplished physician-scientist with designations in the National Academy of Medicine and National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Ramos is a transformational leader recognized throughout the world for his scientific contributions in the areas of genomics and precision medicine and toxicology. 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. In this context, he leads several translational, clinical research and educational programs that integrate diverse approaches to elucidate genomic mechanisms of disease and to develop novel therapies for several oncologic, pulmonary, and vascular diseases. Dr. Ramos has provided academic, executive, administrative and scientific leadership in the areas of genetics and genomic medicine and toxicology at various academic institutions and over the course of his career has positively influenced the career of numerous clinicians and scientists engaged in medical, veterinary and pharmaceutical practice. He is deeply committed to initiatives that advance modern technological applications to improve the quality of healthcare and reduce disease burden and health-associated costs. 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.

Cheryl Walker, M.D., Ph.D, Director of the Center for Precision Environmental Health and a professor in the Departments of Molecular and Cellular Biology, Medicine, and Molecular and Human Genetics at Baylor College of Medicine.

Dr. Cheryl Walker attended the University of Colorado, Boulder majoring in molecular biology, and earned her Ph.D. in molecular biology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. She then enrolled at Baylor College of Medicine for her medical degree. Upon completion, Dr. Walker joined the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. In 2009, she joined the faculty at the MD Anderson Cancer Center as the Ruth and Walter Sterling Professor of Carcinogenesis. While serving in this role, she was the co-recipient of a Grand Opportunity grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences for a two-year research program. Dr. Walker left MD Anderson in 2011 to become the director of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center (TAMHSC) Institute of Biosciences and Technology (IBT), where she was expected to establish a program in translational cancer research. Following this, she was appointed to serve on the Board of Scientific Advisors of the National Cancer Institute and elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. As the director, she brought the TAMHSC into the Gulf Coast Consortia for Quantitative Biomedical Sciences and established the Texas Screening Alliance for Cancer Therapeutics. She also founded a Field-to-Clinic initiative in disease prevention at the IBT and oversaw the development of two centers of research excellence. Recognized for her success, Dr. Walker was named a 2015 "Women on the Move" award recipient by Texas Executive Women. Dr. Walker has over 200 publications in the scientific literature and her research on gene-environment interactions and environmental epigenomics has led to new insights into how early-life exposures reprogram the developing epigenome to alter disease susceptibility across the life-course.

Speakers:

Melissa (Missy) Tursiella: Ph.D., Health Science Program Manager Department of Defense Program Manager - Toxic Exposures Research Program (TERP), Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP).

Dr. Melissa "Missy" Tursiella, as program manager of TERP works to identify the number of known and unknown potentially harmful substances that Service Members are exposed to during their military service. The CDMRP has previously received Congressional support for research aimed at providing healthcare solutions for some of the diseases/conditions linked to these exposures, including the Peer-Reviewed Gulf War Illness Research Program, the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program Burn Pits and Metals Toxicology topic areas and the Peer-Reviewed Neurotoxin Exposure Treatment Parkinson's Research Program. Congress remains committed to helping Veterans affected by Parkinson's disease, Gulf War Illness, and others exposed to potentially toxic substances which result in multiple, diverse symptoms and health abnormalities. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 provides \$30 million for a peer-reviewed, Toxic Exposures Research Program (TERP). The TERP is a new, broad program that will allow the research community to improve scientific understanding and pathobiology of toxic exposures, efficiently assess comorbidities, and speed the development of treatments, cures, and preventions. In line with the Congressional language, appropriated funds will be used to conduct research of clear scientific merit and direct relevance to neurotoxin exposure, Gulf War Illness and its treatment, airborne hazards and burn pits, as well as military service-related toxic exposures in general, including prophylactic medications, pesticides,

organophosphates, toxic industrial chemicals, materials, metals, and minerals. The TERP will coordinate with similar activities in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and encourage collaborations between researchers at military or Veteran institutions and non-military research institutions to leverage the knowledge, infrastructure, and access to military and Veteran populations.

Dr. Raymond Christian: 1990-91 Gulf War Veteran.

Ray escaped the urban slums of Richmond, VA by joining the United States Army at the age of 17. As an infantryman and paratrooper, he served around the world and was awarded The Bronze Star and Combat Infantryman's Badge, among many other decorations for his service. After 20 years, he retired and went back to school, earning his BS in Liberal Arts, MA in Public History, and EdS/EdD in Education Leadership, researching the relationship between parental behavior and African American academic success for his dissertation. During his time as an adjunct professor at Appalachian State University, his most popular courses were "The Souls of Black Folks: An Examination of African American Social Culture" and "Storytelling: Life in the Narrative," which explored historic and contemporary uses of storytelling and oral history in America. Ray's stories have appeared in Reader's Digest's Best Stories in America (2016) and American Hero's (2017) editions. He was selected as the 2017 Serenbe France Focus Storytelling Fellow (Atlanta, GA) and his stories have been featured on NPR radio shows such as The Moth Radio Hour, Snap Judgment, and Backstory as well as the Risk podcast, among many others. As a competitive storyteller, Ray is a ten-time Moth Story Slam Champion, and winner of the 2016 National Storytelling Festival Story Slam. Sharing his stories across the US and Canada, Ray has made several appearances on Moth Mainstage, The National Storytelling Festival Exchange Place (2019), and was part of the 2018 tour of Snap Judgment Live! In 2018, Ray has been named as the best-known storyteller in the south by Bitter Southerner magazine. Glynn Washington, host and producer of Snap Judgment, calls him "a storyteller's storyteller." He is distinguished for his exceptional accomplishments as a performer and spoken word performer and his training and experience as an educator and motivator. Ray is currently the producer and host of What's Ray Saying, a podcast that utilizes history, storytelling and commentary to provide a unique perspective on the African American cultural experience.

James Woody, M.D., Ph.D., Capt. MC U.S.N. (Ret) Former Commanding Officer, Navy Medical Research and Development Command.

Dr. James "Jim" Woody brings more than 30 years of pharmaceutical research and management experience to LVP. Prior to LVP, he was founding CEO of OncoMed Pharmaceuticals, a cancer therapeutic antibody company started by LVP. He was the Board member for both ForteBio, and ProteinSimple, antibody detection companies founded by LVP, and both successfully acquired. Jim was formerly President and General Manager of Roche Bioscience (former Syntex) in Palo Alto, CA, where he had responsibility for a wide range of bioscience research and development, ranging from genetics and genomics to clinical development of numerous new pharmaceuticals. Previously, Jim served as Chief Scientific Officer and Senior Vice President of R & D for Centocor, where he was responsible for the discovery and early clinical development of antibody and peptide-based therapeutic products. While at Centocor, Jim, along with colleagues, developed Remicade, the first of the TNF

inhibitor biologics, that have 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, Jim served as a Navy Medical Officer, and was Head of the Navy Transplant Research Program. With his colleagues and with both Navy and Congressional support, founded the National Marrow Donor Program, which has fostered over 80,000 transplants to date for patients in need of matched transplant donors. He was promoted to 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 1990-91 Gulf War and was awarded the US Navy Legion of Merit for his service. Jim 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. Jim has authored or co-authored over 140 publications.

Robert W. Haley, M.D., Division of Epidemiology, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Dallas, Texas.

Dr. Robert Haley is Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of the Division of Epidemiology in the Internal Medicine Department at UT Southwestern Medical Center and holder of the U.S. Armed Forces Veterans Distinguished Chair for Medical Research Honoring America's Gulf War Veterans. He received his B.A. degree in Philosophy and Social Sciences from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, where he served as instructor in Philosophy for a year. He received his M.D. degree from UT Southwestern Medical School at Dallas and served an internship and residency in Internal Medicine at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas. He spent 10 years (1973-1983) at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), serving as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Public Health Service. At CDC he served as an epidemic investigator in the Epidemic Intelligence Service, a resident in Preventive Medicine, Director of the Hospital Infections Program, and Director of the nationwide Study on the Efficacy of Nosocomial Infection Control (SENIC Project), a nationwide study to identify methods of controlling hospital-acquired infections. He achieved the rank of O-6 and received the U.S. Public Health Service Commendation Medal for his research contributions while at the CDC. He has been an attending physician on the internal medicine services at the Dallas Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Parkland Memorial Hospital and has served on the infection control committees of Parkland and Zale Lipshy University Hospital. Dr. Haley has conducted extensive research on the epidemiology and prevention of hospital-acquired (nosocomial) infections to improve the quality of hospital care and, more recently, Gulf War Illness. He has published over 150 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

J. Wesson Ashford, M.D., Ph.D., Director, War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (affiliated), Stanford University.

Dr. Wesson “Wes” Ashford is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (affiliated) at Stanford University and the Director of the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Dr. Ashford also serves as a Senior Research Scientist at the Stanford / VA Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Research Centers. He is Chair of the Memory Screening Advisory Board of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America and a Senior Editor of the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease. He received his MD (1974) and PhD (1984) from UCLA, completing his dissertation under Dr. Joaquin Fuster. His dissertation was a finalist for the Lindsley Prize for the best in Behavioral Neuroscience (1984). He completed Psychiatry Residency at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute (1979; board certified in Psychiatry, 1981). While serving as the first Chief Resident on the UCLA Geriatric Psychiatry, unit 1978 to 1979, he conducted the first double-blind study of an anti-cholinesterase drug (physostigmine) to treat Alzheimer patients (Ashford et al., 1981); anti-cholinesterase drugs are now the first-line treatment for Alzheimer's dementia. From 1980 to 1985, Dr. Ashford directed the Geriatric Psychiatry Out-patient Clinic at UCLA and initiated the UCLA/Alzheimer PET scan study with Dr. David Kuhl. With Dr. Fuster, he made the first proposal and neurophysiologic demonstration of massive parallel information processing in connections between different regions of the cerebral cortex (Ashford & Fuster, 1985), a critical finding for understanding neuroplasticity and memory (Ashford, Coburn, and Fuster, 1998). His work in Alzheimer's disease and neurophysiology led to the watershed proposal that neuro-plastic memory mechanisms of the brain are specifically affected by Alzheimer pathology (Ashford & Jarvik, 1985, Ashford, 2015). In addition to publishing extensively in nearly all areas of the Alzheimer field, Dr. Ashford has studied numerous other neuropsychiatric illnesses. He provides leadership, mentorship and expert consultation in a wide range of fields touching on and synergistic to brain health and disease. He is currently developing early detection and measurement methods for cognitive function and reformulating theories of Alzheimer pathology. He continues his life-long interest and passion for improving health and slowing aging.

Dane Cook, Ph.D., Health Science Specialist/Research Physiologist, William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, Madison WI.

Dr. Dane B. Cook is the Director of the Exercise Psychology laboratories at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is also the Director of the *Marsh Center for Research in Exercise and Movement* within the Department of Kinesiology at UW-Madison.

Dr. Cook's research focuses on the relationships between physiology and behavior as they relate to acute and chronic exercise, with a specific focus on how exercise influences biological systems in both health and disease. Much of Dr. Cook's research uses brain imaging methods to understand central nervous system mechanisms of pain and fatigue in people with fibromyalgia (FM), myalgic encephalomyelitis / chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and Veterans with Gulf War illness (GWI).

Dr. Cook's research has been funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Defense. His laboratory is currently testing how acute exercise influences autonomic, immune and brain inflammatory responses in GWI.

Michael R Wilson, M.D., Associate Professor, Neurology Weill Institute for Neurosciences, University of California, San Francisco.

Dr. Michael Wilson is a neurologist specializing in infectious and autoimmune diseases of the central nervous system. He sees patients with autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis and autoimmune encephalitis as well as patients with a wide array of infectious diseases that impact the nervous system like HIV, neurocysticercosis, neurosyphilis, viral encephalitis and fungal infections. His laboratory applies metagenomic and immune repertoire sequencing techniques as well as phage display antibody discovery technologies to enhance the understanding of the causes and immunopathogenesis of multiple sclerosis as well as autoimmune and infectious causes of meningoencephalitis.

Dr. Peter Rumm, M.D., M.P.H., Fellow ACPM., Director of Policy VHA Health Outcomes of Military Exposures.

Dr. Rumm, Health Outcomes Military Exposures (HOME) Director of Policy, is a pediatrician and preventive medicine physician who came to VA from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), where he was a special projects officer and deputy clinical director in pre-market divisions dealing with the regulation and safety of medical devices. Dr. Rumm graduated from the Medical College of Georgia and received his Master of Public Health from the University of Washington, concentrating in health services administration and epidemiology. He is a Fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) and has served in leadership positions for the ACPM, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Association of Public Health Physicians (AAPHP). Dr. Rumm was formerly a Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist in the Wisconsin Division of Public Health. He then served as an Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and was the Director of the Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication at the Drexel School of Public Health in Philadelphia. During his time at Drexel, Dr. Rumm also served on the Board of Directors of the Mercy Health Care System in that area and has served on many other boards or committees including the National Advisory Committee on Children and Terrorism. Dr. Rumm's other former professional positions include: 1) Chief, Division of Epidemiology, The Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine in Landstuhl, Germany; and 2) Officer in Charge, Fort Clayton and other Canal Zone Health Care Clinics, Panama. He also served as a part-time editor for the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General during part of his time at FDA. Dr. Rumm has received a lifetime alumni achievement award from Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia and has received a number of other local and international awards and recognitions for his work (including an Order of Malta award from the military health command of Italy). Dr. Rumm is a 2017 graduate of VA's Leadership VA program and is currently in the Health Care Leadership Development Program cohort for 2022

David Thompson, Director, Ph.D., VHA ORD Research Volunteer Program, VA Palo Alto Healthcare System.

Dr. David Thompson currently directs and manages all activities associated with creating, launching and overseeing the VHA Research Volunteer List Program. The program seeks to enroll Veterans who are interested in participating in various research opportunities across the VA. Previously Dr. Thompson was Director, Research Operations/Administrative Officer where

he was Responsible for the day-to-day operations of a growing, complex VA Research and Development Program.

Jason Johnson, 1990-91 Gulf War Veteran.

Mr. Johnson is a Gulf War Veteran suffering with Gulf War Illness (GWI). He came to the attention of the RACGWVI when he spoke at the Veteran Engagement Session (VES) in April of 2022. He poignantly spoke of how the entire VA system seems to have turned its back on Gulf War Veterans from denying their GWI presumptive conditions to lack of proper care and understanding of GWI by the VA staff, both healthcare providers and administrative, and the difficulty faced by many Veterans in trying to navigate the VA claims and care network. His emotionally ruthless presentation touched all in attendance. His invitation to speak is based on a VES question asked to GWV, "If you could tell the VA Secretary one thing about being a GWV with GWI, what would it be?"

Marc Williams, Ph.D., Fellow A.A.A.A.I., Toxicology Directorate, Health Effects Division, US Army Public Health Center.

Dr. Mark A. Williams is a Biologist (Immunotoxicologist) and Project Manager for the Ecotoxicology Assessment Program in the Toxicology Directorate – Health Effects Division of the U.S. Army Public Health Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Dr. Williams has previously served as a Research Biologist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), with research interests in allergic asthma, and environmental exposures to particulate matter and nano-pollutants. Prior to joining the U.S. EPA, Dr. Williams was an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Environmental Medicine at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, and an Instructor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. Williams holds primary degrees in Biotechnology and Bioengineering, as well as Molecular Cell Biology and Immunology. He holds a Ph.D. in Hematological Oncology and Tumor Immunology from Queen Mary College of the University of London, U.K., and has conducted post-doctoral training at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD), La Jolla, CA, and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore. Dr. Williams is a Fellow of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI). Dr. Williams is a frequent external grant reviewer for NASA and their Atmospheric, Earth and Environmental Health Research Panels, and currently serves as the Non-VA Federal Government Chair of a Gulf War Exposures and Health Effects Working Group. In his spare time, Dr. Williams serves as the Editor in Chief of the peer-reviewed journal Drug and Chemical Toxicology and is a member of the Regular Editorial Board of Toxicology Letters, and several others.

Stephen Hunt, M.D., Director, VA Post-Deployment, Integrated Care Initiative.

Dr. Hunt is a VA primary care provider who has been providing post-combat care for returning combat Veterans for nearly 20 years. His Deployment Health Clinic at VA Puget Sound has evaluated and provided ongoing care for over 1500 Veterans from the 1990-91 Gulf War and over 4500 Veterans from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The clinic model was designated as "best practices" for post-combat care in VA in 2006 and since 2008 Dr. Hunt has been the National Director of the VA Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative, training and supporting VA staff nationwide who have implemented similar Veteran centered, team-based models of

integrated post-combat care. He is board certified in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, having focused his training on the health effects of military service as an occupation and combat as an environment.

Lisa McAndrew, Ph.D., Director of Research, Acting Director of Education, NJ War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC), Veterans Affairs New Jersey Healthcare System. The goal of Dr. McAndrew's translational and patient-centered research is to improve care for Veterans with military exposure health concerns, particularly poorly understood health conditions (e.g., Gulf War Illness) including to: (1) understand the impact of deployment on physical symptoms and functioning, (2) determine Veterans' beliefs about their health conditions and functioning, (3) use Veterans' beliefs to develop behavioral interventions Veterans want to receive, (4) discover how to implement these interventions in the VA healthcare system. This includes conducting the second largest clinical trial for Gulf War Illness which showed efficacy of Problem-Solving Treatment for improving the disability from Gulf War Illness, and the first ever effectiveness-implementation clinical trial for Gulf War Illness. She has over 60 peer-reviewed publications and has been continually funded since 2014 to conduct her research from the VA and National Institutes of Health. Her research has been translated and disseminated through-out the VA Healthcare System. She is regularly invited to provide national trainings for providers of Veterans with complex post-deployment health concerns and asked to consult on research and care for Gulf War Illness.

Shannon Nugent, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Division of Clinical Psychology, School of Medicine Core Investigator, VA Portland Healthcare System Assistant Professor, Oregon Health & Science University.

Shannon Nugent, Ph.D. is an investigator at the VA Portland Healthcare System, Center to Improve Veteran Involvement in Care (CIVIC) and an Assistant Professor at Oregon Health and Science University in the Department of Psychiatry. She completed her PhD in Clinical Health Psychology from the University of Colorado Denver in 2015 and completed a two-year health services research fellowship with CIVIC in 2018. Dr. Nugent's research interests are focused on understanding and improving mental health outcomes among individuals with serious medical conditions, including Gulf War Illness and cancer. She is in her fourth year of a five-year Mentored Research Scholar Grant from the American Cancer Society, "Survivors of Head and Neck Cancer: Optimizing Pain Management." In addition, she is leading or collaborating on projects related to cannabis use among cancer survivors and the health experiences of Veterans with Gulf War Illness.

Katharine Bloeser, MSW, Ph.D., Research Scientist, NJ War Related Illness and Injury Study Center; Assistant Professor, City University of New York – Hunter College

Dr. Katharine Bloeser has served Veterans for the majority of her career. Before returning to the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) New Jersey and the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, she served as a researcher and clinical social worker at the Washington, D.C. Veterans Affairs Medical Center's WRIISC and in the Trauma Services clinic treating posttraumatic stress disorder. Dr. Bloeser's work focuses on the accessibility of post-deployment health care. This work supports the ability for health care systems to adapt to the

unique needs of Veterans. While at the VA, she received the prestigious Olin E. Teague award for service to disabled Veterans and was also named social worker of the year by her peers.

April Mohanty, MPH, Ph.D., Research Health Scientist, VA Salt Lake City IDEAS Center; Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Utah.

Dr. April Mohanty's research goals are to identify and reduce health inequalities in chronic disease prevention, management and related outcomes. Dr. Mohanty has training in epidemiology, health services, biomedical informatics, and implementation science and has applied these skills to address gaps in research and practice related to cardiovascular diseases including sudden cardiac arrest, heart failure and hypertension. She also has research experience in women's health and chronic multisymptom illness. Her HSR&D-funded Career Development Award aims to identify reasons for racial disparities in blood pressure management and control. Her research led to an Investigator Initiated Research grant to develop two population health management implementation playbooks to optimize antihypertension medication management and blood pressure control to mitigate hypertension related inequities. Dr. Mohanty received her MPH and Ph.D. from the University of Washington School of Public Health. She is currently a Research Health Scientist at the VA HSR&D Informatics, Decision-Enhancement and Analytic Sciences Center (IDEAS) in Salt Lake City, and an Assistant Professor at the University of Utah, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Epidemiology.

Autumn Gallegos, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Rochester Medical Center.

Dr. Autumn Gallegos is a licensed clinical psychologist and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC). Her research centers on improving intervention effectiveness, primarily through elaborating mechanisms that improve traumatic stress symptoms guided by integrative models of mindfulness and psychophysiological models of stress regulation. Over the course of her career, her research has evolved from a primary focus on community-based trauma exposure to a complementary emphasis on clinical behavioral interventions for traumatic stress. That approach has led to multiple multidisciplinary collaborations with expert clinical intervention researchers, community-based organizations, and psychoneuroimmunologists, contributing to a better understanding of how to address gaps in mental health treatment engagement and effectiveness in populations that experience significant stress symptomatology, which is critical for improving the public health impact of behavioral health interventions. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder and is an experienced mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) instructor and teaches courses to faculty and staff of URMC.

W. Ian Lipkin, MD, is the Director of the Center for Solutions for ME/CFS, the John Snow Professor of Epidemiology at the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the Director for the Center of Infection and Immunity with the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. He is internationally recognized for his contributions to global public health by being at the forefront of outbreak response and through the innovative methods he developed for infectious diseases diagnosis, surveillance, and discovery. These advances have been critical in replacing culture-dependent methods of global health management by creating new criteria for disease causation and de-linking spurious associations

between putative agents and diseases. Such examples include refuting the MMR vaccine having a role in autism and XMRV in ME/CFS. Some of his most prestigious honors include Pew Scholar (Biomedical Sciences), Walter Reed Distinguished Lecturer, the Drexel Prize in Translational Medicine, the Mendel Medal (Villanova University), the International Science and Technology Cooperation Award of the Peoples Republic of China, and recipient of an award of appreciation given by the Chinese government in the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China for his service to the country during the SARS epidemic along with the subsequent scientific support he has given since. Lipkin consulted on testing and site safety protocols for the 2020 Democratic National Convention and the 2021 Academy Awards. He promotes public health awareness via print and broadcast media and served as scientific advisor to the 2011 Soderbergh film "Contagion".

Avindra Nath, M.D.

Senior Investigator, Section of Infections of the Nervous System, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS); Clinical Director, NINDS

Dr. Nath is a physician scientist who specializes in neuroinflammatory disorders of the nervous system. This research is focused on emerging infections that affect the brain and undiagnosed neuroimmune/ neuroinfectious diseases. He received the Pioneer award from the International Society of Neurovirology for his research on HIV neuropathogenesis, the HHS Secretary award for Ebola research, the NCATS director award for research on Zika virus and NIH Directors award for research on ME/CFS. He is an elected member of the Association of American Physicians and an elected Fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science and a Board member of the American Neurological Association. He has published over 500 manuscripts and edited a book on Clinical Neurovirology. He is currently the Clinical Director of NINDS, the Director of the Translational Neuroscience Center and Chief of the Section of Infections of the Nervous System, positions that he has held since 2011.