

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM

### **Joint Veterans Commission of Cuyahoga County**

P.O. Box 32700 Cleveland, Ohio 44132-0700  
Tel. (216) 373-7799 E-mail: [info@jvcocc.org](mailto:info@jvcocc.org) [www.jvcocc.org](http://www.jvcocc.org)

The Joint Veterans Commission of Cuyahoga County recognizes the following individuals and organizations for their support and contributing to the success of this event, through their generous volunteer activity, contributions or special services provided.

#### OUR GRACIOUS HOST

**Mayor Frank G. Jackson  
CITY OF CLEVELAND**

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#### OUR CO-SPONSORS

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#### ORGANIZING TEAM

**Marty Flask**

Director, Cleveland Department of Public Safety  
Chairman, BASE CLEVELAND VETERANS' COMMITTEE  
<http://basecleveland.city.cleveland.oh.us/index.html>

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**Richard DeChant**

Executive Director, Tri-C Veteran Programs & Services  
[www.tri-c.edu/welcome/veterans/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.tri-c.edu/welcome/veterans/Pages/default.aspx)

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**Rimantas Ray Saikus**

President, Joint Veterans Commission of Cuyahoga County

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#### VETERANS PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

**Liberty Veterans Honor Garden**

710 MLK Jr. Drive  
[www.jvcocc.org/LVHG](http://www.jvcocc.org/LVHG)



*THE JOINT VETERANS COMMISSION  
OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY*



- In Partnership With -

*CITY OF CLEVELAND*

&

*CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE*

Welcome You To

# Veterans Day 2008

Tuesday – November 11<sup>th</sup> - 11:00 a.m.



**CLEVELAND CITY HALL**

601 Lakeside Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44114



## TIMOTHY ESPICH

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

OHIO DEPARTMENT  
OF VETERANS SERVICES

*"Tim has been a strong voice for our veterans and their families as director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs. His military experience and his relationship with our veterans' community will be a tremendous asset to the new department."*

~ Governor Strickland 2008

Timothy Espich was selected by the Governor to assume the duties of the first Assistant Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services on August 21st, 2008. Espich previously served under two Governors as the Director of the Governor's Office of Veterans Affairs and was substantial in the creation of the new Department of Veterans Services.

Espich was born and raised in Springfield, Ohio. He graduated from Franklin University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration.

In 1981, Espich enlisted in the U.S. Army National Guard as a computer operator and became a full-time active guard soldier in 1984. In his 24 years of military service, he served in several positions, including platoon, battalion and operations sergeant, and retired as a master sergeant in September 2005.

Espich is the recipient of numerous military awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal and the Ohio Distinguished Service Medal. Most recently he was the recipient of the 2008 Vietnam Veterans of America, Buckeye State Council's 'Veteran Advocacy Award of the Year'.

Espich is married to Dawn Renee, his wife and high school sweetheart of more than 20 years. They have two sons, Ryan and Brandon.

## LIBERTY VETERANS HONOR GARDEN

**SPONSOR** - Joint Veterans Commission of Cuyahoga County (JVCOCC)

**MISSION** - Establish a garden to honor all of our nation's defenders who gave their lives not only in the defense of our country but also to bring freedom to many nations around the world. It is appropriate to establish the garden among Cleveland's Cultural Gardens since the people of many of the nations represented in the Cleveland Cultural Garden chain now enjoy their freedom due to the sacrifice of those to be honored here. It is also to be an expression of gratitude to their families, those who served with them and their families. This site will assure our current and future defenders, as well as their families, that their service and sacrifice and their contributions to preserving our culture and the cultures of the world will not be forgotten and cherished forever.

**LOCATION** - 710 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, near the Northernmost and West point of the Cleveland Cultural Garden Chain with a prominent view as well as an ample area to honor past and future generations of our nation's defenders and hold ceremonies in remembrance of their sacrifice.

**CONCEPT** - A tree will be planted in the Liberty Veterans Honor Garden for each century in which our nation has lost its sons and daughters in battle. There will be four trees initially planted, one for each of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. A monument near each of the century trees, will identify and describe to the viewer the significance of the events where many made the ultimate sacrifice and moved veterans and citizens to memorialize the sacrifice of those who gave their all and those who served. A tree will be planted in the Liberty Veterans Honor Garden to honor all of our allies who gave their lives while fighting alongside us on our soil and throughout the world. A monument will identify the defining events and describe to the viewer their contributions. The plaza, a flat globe of the world, will have all the countries. The walkways and plaza area will be built from stone obtained from countries throughout the world and where our nation's defenders have served and died delivering freedom and preserving the world's cultures. The paving stones will be inscribed to identify the nation of origin. A garden Center Monument of unique and significant design will be installed to express the citizens and veterans gratitude to our nations defenders whom we lost in battle and to their families. It will allow future generations to continue to honor those who serve and served and help them never to forget those who came before them. A separate monument will introduce the visitor to this site and the WWI Veterans Liberty Row Memorials along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (originally dedicated as Liberty Boulevard in memory of those who died during WWI).

### **Words to be inscribed in the center monument will relay this message**

"We will hold you dear forever for the memory of your sacrifice nurtures the spirit of our nation and the hope for freedom and peace throughout the world. Your lives were the ultimate contributions to the preservation of the cultures expressed in these Cleveland Cultural Gardens"

**CONTIGUOUS PROJECT** – Restoration of the 800+ WWI Memorial Trees with markers at their bases originally dedicated in 1919 in honor of those killed from Greater Cleveland Ohio during WWI. This restoration and separate project is referred to as the WWI Liberty Row Veterans Memorials and it is also being sponsored by the JVCOCC. The marker medallions will be cast from bronze that will be made from re-using the bronze plates that were at the "Fountain of Eternal Life" at Mall "A" in downtown Cleveland (by the Marriott Hotel and Cleveland Board of Education Building) prior to its rededication to all who died from Cuyahoga County starting with the Spanish American War and up to and including the most recent and current Persian Gulf Wars.

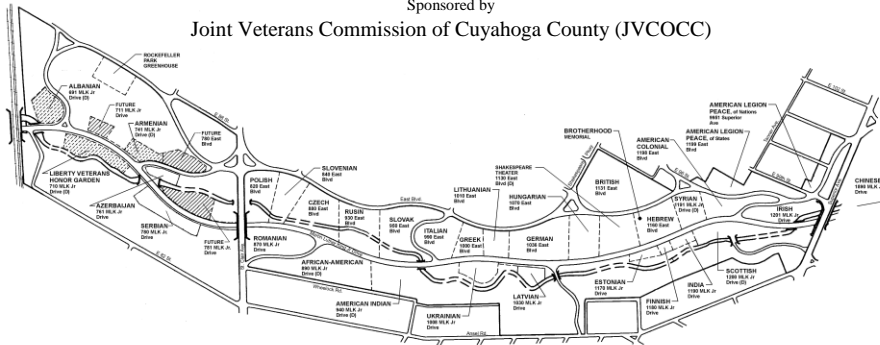
\* REMEMBERING AND HONORING \*  
 \* THOSE WHO SERVED \*  
 Future Site  
**Liberty Veterans Honor Garden**



THEY WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES DEFENDING FREEDOM  
MADE THE ULTIMATE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURES  
OF THE WORLD AND FOUND EXPRESSED  
IN THESE CULTURAL GARDENS

710 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE  
 ROCKEFELLER PARK/CLEVELAND CULTURAL GARDENS

Sponsored by  
 Joint Veterans Commission of Cuyahoga County (JVCOCC)



CLEVELAND CULTURAL GARDENS  
 Revised August 13, 2008



(D) - Garden under Development

# Veterans Day 2008

Tuesday – November 11<sup>th</sup> - 11:00 a.m.  
 CLEVELAND CITY HALL

## CEREMONY

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Welcome                      | <b>Martin L. Flask</b> , Director<br>Cleveland Department of Public Safety<br>Chairman - City of Cleveland Veterans Committee   |
| Introductions:               | <b>Richard Dechant</b> – Master of Ceremony<br>Executive Director - Veteran Programs & Services<br>Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)   |
| Presenting of Colors         | <b>Color Guard</b><br>Cleveland Department of Public Safety   |
| National Anthem              | <b>Beatrice Rivera</b> , Paramedic<br>Cleveland Division of Emergency Medical Service   |
| Invocation                   | <b>Reverend George Hankins</b> , Chaplain<br>Cleveland VA Medical Center  |
| Acknowledgments              | <b>Richard DeChant</b>  |
| Greetings                    | <b>Rimantas Ray Saikus</b> , President<br>Joint Veterans Commission of Cuyahoga County (JVCOCC)   |
| Guest Speaker                | <b>Timothy A. Espich</b> , Assistant Director<br>Ohio Department of Veterans Services   |
| Recognitions & Proclamations | <b>Mayor Frank G. Jackson</b><br>City of Cleveland<br><br><b>Rimantas Ray Saikus</b><br>JVCOCC<br><br><b>Richard DeChant</b><br>Tri-C   |
|                              | <b>“Employee Veteran of the Year”</b><br>Honoree - <b>Sam Harrison</b><br><br><b>“Service to Veterans and Community Award”</b><br>Citizen Honoree - <b>Harriet Beekman</b><br>Veteran Honoree - <b>Dianah Kwiatkowski</b><br><br><b>“Student Veteran - Excellence in Leadership Award”</b><br>Honoree - <b>Derek Lett</b><br>Honoree - <b>Donald Gaddis</b><br>Honoree - <b>Monique Menefee</b> |
| Closing Remarks              | <b>Richard DeChant</b>  |
| Benediction                  | <b>Reverend George Hankins</b> , Chaplain<br>Cleveland VA Medical Center  |
| Amazing Grace                | <b>Public Safety Pipes and Drums</b><br>Cleveland Department of Public Safety   |
| Taps                         | <b>Edwin Zelek</b>  |
| Volley                       | <b>Gung-Ho Detachment 650</b><br>Marine Corps League  |

**THE JOINT VETERANS COMMISSION OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY**  
**CITIZEN HONOREE**

**Harriet Beekman**

**“2008 IN SERVICE TO VETERANS AND COMMUNITY AWARD”**

Harriet Beekman has been a champion for our troops, veterans and her fellow citizens for over half a century. She placed her heart, soul and body behind every effort that she participated in and the many organizations she served.



Her earliest volunteer activity was as a Civil Defense worker, from 1949 until the group disbanded in 1990. In the early 1950's she gave her time to benefit the Red Cross, March of Dimes and United Appeal. From 1952 until 1978, Harriet held several Chair positions in the Fairview Park Schools PTA's and helped as a school lunchroom mother. The Girl Scouts benefited from her dedication to them as she served for 12 years as a leader as well as 8 years as a troop consultant and organizer. At the same time she volunteered as a bookkeeper and supervisor for the Fairview Park Recreation Department. Later on, Harriet initiated the first Senior Citizen Program with initial meetings being held in her home.

The first troops to benefit from Harriet's initiatives were the Vietnam soldiers because of her concern for their feeling neglected and as reported to her son, Ernie Pyle, by a Marine friend. Ernie served three years in Vietnam as a helicopter crew chief. In 1967 she established the "We Do Care" program and supported by other mothers with children in the Armed Forces, they mailed packages to our service men and women. Initially, Harriet absorbed the shipping costs but as the word of the program spread, money for postage and the goods for the packages started to pour in. This program is still continuing and to date over 500 packages have been sent to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Those "Who gave their all" in Vietnam did not have to wait long to be honored in Fairview Park, in 1970 Harriet established our nation's first Vietnam War memorial, located in the foyer of City Hall. It grew to include all from the community who died during any military service.

Harriet was not satisfied with just food and goods showing the community's care for the troops, so she founded "God and Country" in 1976 to bring further comfort for their hearts and souls. This was a competitive program where eighth grade students write letters to our men and women in the military services. It has become an outstanding way to promote patriotism, respect for God, country and those who serve in our armed forces, and promoting understanding of the price paid in preserving our freedom.

Many organizations have benefited from Harriet's involvement. She has served as a trustee of the Greater Cleveland Veterans Memorial, on the Advisory Board at Wade Park VA Hospital, and as a board member of the USO of Northern Ohio. Harriet has been recognized for her contributions at local, state and national levels.

At the young age of 88, even after a stroke, Harriet carries on her commitment to her beloved troops, veterans, and fellow citizens by working on her "We Do Care", "God and Country" and various other programs.

**CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT VETERAN HONOREE**

**Monique Menefee**

**“2008 EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP”**

Honorably Discharged from the United States Air Force, Ms. Monique Menefee has never really stopped serving as a role model and leader. Even out of uniform she continues to demonstrate the military core values of honor, respect and accountability in all she has done, particularly at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C).

Just this past April, her efforts on campus resulted in her becoming the recipient of the College's President's Leadership Award for our Metropolitan Campus. And just this year, Monique was selected to be the Student Body Representative to the College's Board of Trustees – the first time a student veteran has held this position.



Ms. Menefee also is not one to shy away from a challenge. She is currently pursuing not one – but three – Associate Degrees here at Tri-C in Applied Business, the Arts, and Science. She currently is holding 4.0 GPA in all three disciplines for each semester attended and is on the Dean's List.

**CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT VETERAN HONOREE**

**Derek Lett**  
**“2008 EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP”**

Derek Lett was born in East Cleveland and resides in the in the same house today in which he was raised. As Derek will tell you, his reason for staying it’s part of his personal commitment to making a difference in Greater Cleveland. It was a commitment to “mission success” that he learned about while serving in the United States Navy aboard the aircraft carriers USS Constellation and the USS Kitty Hawk.



Derek will be the first to tell you that his first day at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) was very discouraging the service I received was not what I was expecting. However, it would be Derek’s uncle Roger Lett who introduced him to the College’s Veterans Upward Bound Program. One day after walking off campus Derek met with the Veterans Upward Bound team and was assisted through the whole enrollment process and became a Tri-C student.

The Tri-C Veterans Initiative also helped Derek to develop and use his leadership skills and abilities on campus which have flourished into his involvement in:

President of Veterans Today student veteran club  
Vice President of Student Government  
Student Government Senator  
Student Ambassador  
100 Black Collegiate Men  
President of the Law Enforcement Club (for law enforcement students)  
Lead Student on Student Safety Patrol  
Part time employee (Supervisor of the Wi fi Café)

Derek only has three more classes left before receiving an Associates’ Degree in Law Enforcement (with a concentration in Security Administration.)

Derek’s future ambitions are to become a full time employee at Tri –C, continue his education at Tiffin University, and become the owner of his own security firm.

His long term goal, to one day become Mayor of East Cleveland and set an example of what men should evolve into over time.

**THE JOINT VETERANS COMMISSION OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY**  
**VETERAN HONOREE**

**Dianah Kwiatkowski**  
**“2008 IN SERVICE TO VETERANS AND COMMUNITY AWARD”**

Our troops, our veterans, and our fellow citizens have had the fortune of having a caring and giving person in Dianah Kwiatkowski while she was serving our country and as a nurse in civilian life.

Dianah obtained an Associate Degree in Nursing from Cuyahoga Community College and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Graceland University. She completed further studies: Bio-Ethics at Cleveland State University; Officer Basic Course at Ft. Sam Houston; Officer Advanced Course at Trinity University; Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) training at Ft. Dietrick and Ft. Aberdeen.

During her military career, Dianah served as an Equal Opportunity officer at Ft. Sheridan in Illinois and as a nurse during Desert Shield and Dessert Storm.

She has served as staff member for FEDSHEAL, which is PDHRA (Post Deployment Health Reassessment) for soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.

As a veteran she has shared a leadership role in establishing the Southwest Asia Veterans Association. She has also had a significant role in beginning and continuing the “Desert Storm End of the War” commemoration ceremony. She also helped organize an annual “Women Veterans Banquet” titled “In the Company of Heroes” whose proceeds benefited the “Women in Military Service to America Memorial” project. She has been an active member of American Legion Post 91.

Dianah is a Southwest General Hospital Staff Nurse in the Medical Intensive Care Unit. She is also an instructor with the Registered Nurse program at Lorain Community College. At the college she prepares new generations of medical care givers by enhancing the students experience with patients and in particular veterans. Dianah makes it a point to take her students to the Veterans Home in Sandusky, introducing them to the veterans, encouraging personal interaction with them and to witness the veterans needs. To help the students understand the sacrifice made by veterans and their families, she also takes her students to the annual 9/11 Ceremony in her city of Berea.

She has reached out to Veterans of previous generations by participating in the Honor Flight and escorting ailing WWII veterans in a program that takes them to the WWII Memorial in Washington D.C. as well as the Korean and Vietnam Memorials.

Dianah is the author of the book “When Duty Called: Even Grandma Had To Go”. She has been the keynote speaker at “Memorial Day” programs of various communities.

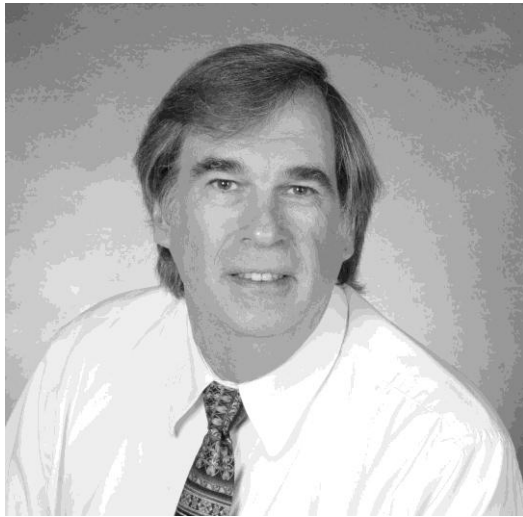
Her commitment to help in the complete healing of our veterans and returning warriors is unwavering and exemplary.



**CITY OF CLEVELAND**  
**HONOREE**

**Sam Harrison**  
**“2008 EMPLOYEE VETERAN OF THE YEAR”**

The City of Cleveland Veterans Committee is proud to announce that Sam Harrison, a 26 year employee of the City of Cleveland, as the recipient of the 2008 Employee Veteran of the Year award. Sam is a career employee of the City of Cleveland, employed as a Supervisor of Application Development in the City's Department of Community Development.



Sam is also active in the City of Cleveland Veterans Committee, a volunteer group of men and women committed to supporting military veterans in our community. His hard work and commitment, his efforts to create a Base Cleveland website, and his dedication to our fellow veterans led to him being unanimously selected as the City of Cleveland Veteran of the Year.

In February 1969, at the age of 20, Sam was inducted into the United States Army. He completed his Military Police training at Fort Gordon, Georgia and served a tour of duty in Vietnam with the 630th Military Police Company.

He performed military police and combat-related duties in Vietnam, including convoy escort, and bridge and checkpoint security. In addition, Sam also served with the 630th MP Company Reaction Force; a tactical unit formed to quell disturbances and engage the enemy in villages surrounding military installations.

He regularly volunteers to train the disabled in computer skills; and, was recently honored by the South Ohio Veterans Association (SOVA) - an organization dedicated to helping hospitalized veterans.

He is a life time member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. His military awards include the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Streamer.

**CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**STUDENT VETERAN HONOREE**

**Donald Gaddis**  
**“2008 EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP”**

Donald Gaddis is a native Clevelander who graduated from Law and Public Service High School in 1989. Upon graduating, he joined the United States Air Force as an Air Crew Life Support Systems Specialist.



Don's leadership skills which he honed while in the Air Force have enabled him to step to the forefront at Cuyahoga Community College in the following roles:

Current Student Government President  
Joint Student Council President  
President of 100 Collegiate of Tri-C  
(mentees of 100 Black Men of Greater Cleveland)

Don is also active in organizing voter campaigns for the campus and community, developing programs to engage students and vets- improving their campus experience, and initiatives aimed at their overall academic success of the student body at large.

Last semester Don was awarded of the Tri-C Student of the Year \$2,000 cash scholarship. Following his career at Tri-C, Don's plans are to transfer to John Carroll University to work on a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

The father of a daughter who lives in Phoenix, Arizona. Don is passionate and committed to the positions he holds at Cuyahoga Community College, and the responsibilities of student leadership.