

MAYOR

Thank you for joining us today for Carmel's Veterans Day Ceremony. It is important to all generations that we honor and remember those who have fought and served our nation to preserve our freedom, which makes America such a great nation. While we should never take those freedoms for granted, it is even more important during times of conflict to remember why we fight for freedom. Many of us have loved ones involved in the current war with Iraq and we must show them our support. Many of us have become acutely aware of the sacrifices many families have made and continue to make, in order that we may live in a free society. It is important for us to come together each year as a community to thank those who took great risks and remember those who gave their lives to protect our freedoms.

Today we honor the brave citizen heroes who have unselfishly supported our nation in defense of our freedoms. We pause to observe Veterans Day - A day to help preserve in the hearts and lives of all our citizens, the spirit of patriotism, the love of country and the willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Our current war has called many Hoosiers away from their homes to protect our freedoms. Among them, have been five of our City employees. They are Carmel Police Officer Willie Collins, who returned last January after serving in Iraq; Carmel Police Officer Dan Matthews, who returned last September after serving in Bosnia; Carmel Firefighter Kip Benbow, who returned last August after serving in Afghanistan; Carmel Firefighter Bryan Mason, who served in Bosnia and returned last December; and Neil Reeves a new fire recruit who served in Iraq. I hope that some of you were able to join us today. If Willie, Dan, Kip, Bryan or Neil are in the audience would you please stand so that we can thank all of you for the sacrifices you have made to serve our country.

I'm not sure we can ever thank our Veterans enough for the sacrifices they were willing to make in order that this great nation would endure.

If you are a veteran celebrating with us today, would you please stand so that you can be recognized for your selfless service to our country.

Let's have a round of applause for our veterans ... As a token of our appreciation the City has a small gift for each of you. If our Veterans would please form a line to my right, your left, I would like to present each of you with a small gift and shake your hand.

For the past two years, we have told you about the Veterans Memorial being built just west of us here at Freedom Circle in City Center. Just about a month ago, we were able to unveil the Veterans Statue that now graces the pedestal that long stood empty. The statue is on the cover of your program today.

It gives us a place to come and reflect on the sacrifices others have made. The addition of this beautiful statue gives us another focus for our reflection on the service of others and our freedoms. It is important to have a place to come and remember those who were willing to give their lives and those who did give their lives in service to our country. It is also important that we located Freedom Circle in City Center, a place that will eventually be Carmel's downtown, so that all residents and visitors will come in contact with this memorial frequently. It is not in some far off corner of our city, but in the *heart* of our city. I hope you visit and enjoy it often.

I want to give a special thanks to the Carmel Clay Veterans Memorial Corporation for providing a lasting reminder and tribute to our Veterans for Carmel to enjoy for generations to come.

In an effort to show their loyalty and respect for our veterans, Clay Middle School Social Studies Department partnered with Logo USA to supply much needed comfortable clothing for our local recovering Veterans. Students donated the money they made by working extra jobs around the house, raking leaves, and babysitting which totaled an amazing \$11,000. Sweats were purchased with the money raised from Logo USA and delivered by students and staff of Clay to the Roudebush Veterans Medical Center today, just in time for Veterans Day tomorrow. This endeavor is very commendable and was a great way to get the kids actively involved in supporting our veterans.

As a part of our Veterans Day activities we hold poster and essay contests for the youth throughout our community so they can be involved in thanking our veterans and reflecting on what service to our country means. This encourages meaningful discussion between students and their parents and teachers. Each year we get letters of thanks from teachers telling us how they appreciate being able to incorporate Carmel's Veterans Day ceremonies with school curriculum and parents who are thankful they had the opportunity to discuss the military service of family members and others with their kids.

The poster contest is for children in elementary grades 5 and lower, the essay contest is for middle and high school- aged students.

We invited participation from all schools located in Carmel and Clay Township, both public and private. While not all schools chose to participate, we had a tremendous increase in the number of posters and essays submitted and I am very proud of the quality of the contest entries we received. The theme for this year's contest was "Stand Beside Them."

The posters and essays were judged by representatives from our local veterans' organizations and the Carmel Arts Council.

I will begin by honoring the poster contest winners.

At this time would the poster contest winners please stand and walk over to your winning poster and stand next to it. I will come to you there to present you with your certificate.

[\(Mayor presents certificates to the winners\)](#)

Now, we will honor our essay contest winners who will read their winning essays for us today.

[\(Essays are read by the winners\)](#)

Thank you to all who participated in our contest. It is very reassuring to realize that our younger generation has great appreciation for and an understanding of the sacrifices their ancestors have made for the freedom of our country.

We will now hear from the Carmel Elementary School choir as they offer us a Musical Tribute to Veterans. When you hear the theme from your branch of the military, please stand and be recognized.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker. A local philanthropist who began his career after receiving a bachelor's degree from Purdue and his masters from Butler. He defended freedom worldwide while serving in the U.S. Army Corps for thirteen years, two of which were in France. He enlightened young minds at Fishers High School for 33 years. After retiring in 1996 as the Sheridan Superintendent of Schools he pioneered as the first Varsity Basketball coach at Hamilton Southeastern High School in 1967.

While serving on the Carmel Clay Veterans Memorial Corporation he has shown great success in raising funds for the recently dedicated Veterans Memorial. He is a past President of the Sheridan Kiwanis Club and served on the Legacy Community Foundation Board and its Scholarship component. To benefit graduates of Sheridan High School he assisted in the development of the Marion Adams Scholarship Foundation.

He has given many years of dedicated service to his country and his community. It is an honor to have him with us today. Please join me in welcoming, Wayne Long.

(Wayne Long Speaks)

Thank you for joining us today to honor our veterans. That concludes our ceremony.

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