



June 30, 2026

To the Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation Community,

As I close twelve years as President of the Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation, I find myself reflecting with deep appreciation on the people and partnerships that helped steer this journey. It has been one of the great honors of my life to serve alongside the extraordinary volunteers, veterans, civic leaders, and supporters who share a steadfast commitment to honoring those who have served our nation.

So many hands helped shape this work. I am especially grateful to the Los Gatos Town Council and Town Staff, who entrusted us with realizing our dream; and to Gary Filizetti, his Devcon crew and the subcontractors who worked with us as partners in bringing construction leadership to the raising of *The Flame of Liberty Memorial*. I am grateful, too, to our many in-kind donors; to memorial artist Frank Kocian Morris for his exceptional design; to the First Responder Chiefs of Santa Clara County Fire and the Los Gatos–Monte Sereno Police and their teams; to the talented Leonardis family, who graciously adorned a temporary headquarters location with their distinctively artistic patriotic mural; to the Los Gatos Lions, Los Gatos Music and Arts, KCAT, Kiwanis, Rotary, and the many Los Gatos–based service clubs and fellow veterans-focused nonprofits; and to the broader community that stood with us throughout.

To our donors: your extraordinary generosity, above all, turned a shared vision into reality. Together we completed *The Flame of Liberty Memorial* and gave our community a welcoming place to gather, remember, and heal—and that same generosity now improves the lives of veterans and their families through programs that endure today.

To our Board and Advisory Board members: history celebrates the structures we can see, but they stand only because of the foundations laid quietly beneath them—the ones who show up, decide, steward, and serve without thought of reward. You understood that to honor those who sacrificed for our freedom is a sacred trust, and you carried that trust with a devotion equal to the cause itself. It has been a privilege to serve alongside you.

I have long believed that organizations like ours are sustained not by individuals, but by communities united in purpose, and you have proven that belief true again and again.

Every transition is also a beginning, and I have full confidence in the Foundation's future under Charles "Chaud" Richards, a veteran whose dedication and vision I trust completely. I ask that you extend to Chaud the same warmth, generosity, and support you so graciously showed me.

Though I am stepping down as President, I will continue to support the Foundation in an advisory role. Thank you for the trust you have extended to me. It has been a privilege to serve.

With sincere gratitude,

Major General Kent Hillhouse U.S. Army (ret)
Outgoing President, Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation