



# A PRAYER FOR OUR BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN

Almighty God,

You are our Creator and Sustainer.

You are our Light and our Fortress.

You are our Wisdom and our Strength.

Lord, you moved upon people to establish this great nation.  
You stirred people to hope and to dream for a land of freedom.  
We praise you for this great nation.

Lord, you have inspired many of our best and brightest to  
volunteer to proudly stand and defend our beloved country.  
You have given us brave and loyal men and women who have  
steadfastly served in their chosen branch of our military.

We gather today to remember our military personnel. We  
acknowledge that their service enables us to walk as free men  
and women in this great land.

Lord, today we seek to honor your sons and daughters who  
have served or who are serving our country. We are reminded  
that because of their service we can live in safety.

We ask that you abundantly bless those who have previously  
served. May their service time be rewarded in every way. May  
they gain earthly and heavenly blessings from their unselfish  
love of country.

Lord, we stop now and remember those who are currently  
serving. We ask that you provide them with your protection,  
your strength, and your peace. We ask that you would  
abundantly provide for all their needs. We ask that you would  
enable them to overcome every personal and professional  
obstacle. We ask that you would protect their families from  
hurt and harm.

May each of our veterans feel honored not just today but every  
day.

We pray these things in Jesus' name,

Amen



# **IMMACULATE HIGH SCHOOL VETERANS TRIBUTE NOVEMBER 11, 2021**

## **WELCOME**

Mary Maloney

## **OPENING PRAYER**

Deacon Jeff

## **REFLECTION INTERLUDE**

You Raise Me Up - Inspire Choir

## **PSALM & INTERCESSIONAL PRAYER**

Deacon Jeff

## **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Concert Band

## **ALUMNI VETERAN REFLECTIONS**

Tom Mertens (need official military title)

## **SPECIAL MUSICAL TRIBUTE**

Armed Forces Tribute and God Bless America - IHS Band

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Tom Saadi (need official military title)

## **CHORAL MELODY**

National Anthem, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory, America the Beautiful - Inspire Choir

## **FINAL BLESSING AND CLOSING**

Deacon Jeff Font Final Blessing with Presentation of Gifts by Wendy Neil and Mary Maloney





# A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Thank you for joining us at Immaculate High School's Veterans Day Tribute. We are extremely grateful to have local and alumni veterans join us as we honor their significant contributions as well as the sacrifices that they and their loved ones have endured. They are our most remarkable heroes; heroes who protect our freedom.

We are most grateful to the community officials who have joined us in celebration: Mayor Mark Boughton, who respectfully appreciates all those who have served in our community and country as well as Tom Saadi, an Immaculate alumnus and today's keynote speaker who is the Acting Commissioner for the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs and Major in the U.S. Reserve.

We offer our deepest appreciation to all individuals who have served our country. Their dedication and commitment on our behalf is immeasurable. We thank each and every one of them for their hardships and dedicated selflessness. We pray that God's blessings are with them always.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary R. Maloney".

Mary R. Maloney  
President



## **THOMAS J. SAADI**

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Thomas J. Saadi is a proud Immaculate High School Alumni – Class of 1988. He currently serves as Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs since his reconfirmation by the Connecticut General Assembly in March 2019, after serving as Commissioner

since February 2018. He served as Acting Commissioner of the Department from October 2017 to February 2018, and prior to that served as Chief of Staff and General Counsel for the Department. Commissioner Saadi is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. Prior to his service with the Department of Veterans Affairs in May 2015, Commissioner Saadi served for fifteen years as an Assistant Attorney General and Special Prosecutor for the State of Connecticut. He retired from the Danbury City Council in March 2019, after twenty years of service.

Commissioner Saadi received his military commission as a Judge Advocate in the Army Reserve in 2005, completed Officer Basic training in 2006, Officer Advanced training in 2014 and Command and General Staff College in 2016. He currently serves as Chief International Law Officer for Governance with the 352nd Civil Affairs Command and previously served as Chief of National Security Law for the 412th Theater Engineer Command after completing an active-duty mobilization at Watervliet Arsenal in New York in May 2020. Commissioner Saadi also served as Chief Legal Officer for the 411th Civil Affairs Battalion and with the 4th Legal Operations Detachment. He is a graduate of Western Connecticut State University and received his law degree from Quinnipiac College School of Law.

Commissioner Saadi was born in Boston, Massachusetts and is a first-generation Lebanese American making him the first Arab-American Commissioner of Veterans Affairs in Connecticut. He lived in Massachusetts until his family moved to Saudi Arabia in 1978 for his father's employment and in 1985 he returned to his mother's hometown of Danbury, Connecticut where he resides with his wife Valerie Ventura-Saadi and their twin children.





## TOM MARTENS

Colonel Mertens, upon graduating from St. Bonaventure University in May 1973 was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army.

His assignments include tours of duty with a Nike-Hercules missile battery in Germany, serving as a platoon leader

and executive officer, command and staff positions within the 82D Airborne Division, command position in the 76th Army Reserve Training Division and numerous staff positions within Civil Affairs Units at the Company, Battalion, Brigade and Command level. His final assignment was as the Inspector General of the 77th Reserve Support Command, Ft Totten NY. In May 2003, he retired from the Army with over 23 years active duty and 30 years total service.

He has attended the Army Airborne School, Air Defense Artillery Officer Basic and Advance courses, the, US Army Jumpmaster School, Civil Affairs Officer Advance Course and the Inspector General Course. He is a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College.

Decorations include the Legion of Merit Medal, Meritorious Service Medal ( 2nd award), Army Commendation Medal (3rd award), Army Achievement Medal ( 2nd award), Global War on Terror Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal ( 3rd award).

In 2007 he began his second career, Physics Teacher at Immaculate High School. While teaching he also served as the Faculty Representative to the School Advisory Board for seven years, Dean of Students for four years and was a member of the Faculty Council for the National Honor Society for 11 years. He retired following the 2019-2020 school year.

Colonel Mertens and his wife have been married for 47 years, have four grown daughters and six grandchildren.



## MICHAEL WILSON

Captain Michael F. Wilson, US Coast Guard (Retired), is the father of Joseph Wilson '22. Mike serves on Immaculate High School's Enrollment Committee and is an active member of the school community.

Captain Wilson began his military career as Deck Watch Officer aboard USCGC MELLON, a 378 foot vessel stationed in Seattle, WA that performed missions such as Search and Rescue (SAR) and Fisheries Law Enforcement in the Pacific. His next assignment was as Commanding Officer of USCGC POINT WHITEHORN, an 82 foot patrol boat stationed in St. Thomas, USVI. In this capacity, he led a crew of 10 in performance of Counter-Narcotics and Search and SAR missions. A highlight of this tour was the seizure of more than 1,300 pounds of cocaine from an airdrop off the coast of Puerto Rico.

Following this tour, Captain Wilson worked as a Controller in the Seventh District Command Center located in Miami, FL. During his four years in the world's busiest Rescue and Coordination Center (RCC), he planned and coordinated thousands of SAR cases, saving several hundred lives.

After transitioning to the reserves, Mike served as a Command Duty Officer at Sector New York. In the aftermath of 9/11, he served as part of the team that reopened the port of NY/NJ, enforcing heightened security measures while enabling the flow of goods to get the regional economy back on its feet.

Captain Wilson is a 1989 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy and holds an MBA from Rice University. He and his wife Sally and their son Joseph, reside in Danbury, CT





## MICHAEL KEARNS

I was a Sergeant in the Army. Spent a year and a day in Vietnam. Nineteen (19) when I went over there, Twenty (20) when I came home from there.

The first Six (6) months of my tour were spent with the 525th Military Intelligence Group a MACV outfit known

as Military Assistance Command Vietnam – I was a Radio Man stationed in a remote area known as Tan-An in close proximity to the Mekong Delta. For the remaining Six (6) months of my tour I was transferred into The Central Highlands and was stationed with the 1st Aviation Brigade, 10th Battalion, 183rd Company – A Bird Dog Reconnaissance outfit with the Company Motto "Flying For Freedom". The Company Based itself in Dong Ba Thin Vietnam. There too I was the Company Radio Man. There are many stories to be told, but let me say this, we are so lucky and blessed to live in America, a quality of life far beyond what we witnessed as soldiers in a country torn with chaos and turmoil. I will never forget the smell – it still sticks with me to this day! We have nothing to complain about, we truly are the lucky ones as American Citizens, and where I live in The Northwest Corner of Connecticut, well, all I can say is it's a true touch of heaven. And yes again, we are truly the lucky ones!

Carry On.

Michael Kearns. Sergeant Class of 1968





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# IHS ALUMNI, STAFF & FAMILY VETERANS

## United States Air Force

> Brian Bigham '66 - Staff Sergeant  
Served 1967-1971

> Ed Casagrande '79 - Sergeant  
Served 1982-1989

> Joseph Coleman - Airman First Class  
Served 1953-1957

> Matteo Diamond '14- Senior Airman  
Served 4 Years

> Richard Diaz '79 - Air Force  
Served 1981-1993

> Steven Erhardt '67 - Lieutenant Colonel  
Served 1972-1994

> Al Lupenski '80 - Brigadier General  
Served 1982-Present

> Jeffrey Paquin '83 - Staff Sergeant  
Served 1986-1993

> Cecile (Lepus) Polidan-Ford '68  
Sergeant (E4) - Served 1969-1972

> Tom Sendewicz '80 - Crew Chief  
Served 1981-1983

> Devin Stilson '69 - Captain  
Served 1969-1979

> Robert Wishtischin '80

## United States Army

- > Terrence Brennan '79
- > Nancy (Shelley) Darmory '90 - Major  
Served 1994-2006
- > Tim Dunn - E4-Specialist  
Served 1987-1990
- > Robert Jedzinak '66 - Major  
Served 1970-1992
- > Michael Kearns '68 - Sergeant E-5  
Served 1970-1971
- > John Lopes '80

- > Brendan McGrath '13
- > Thomas Mertens  
Colonel, Inspector General  
Served 1973-2003
- > Kevin Moraghan '79
- > Donald Sluti '66 - First Lieutenant  
Served 1970-1972

## United States Marines

- > Kevin Bennett '06
- > Michael Bennett '04 - Captain  
Served 2009-2017
- > Michael Brennan - Colonel  
Served 1980-2010
- > Zachary Bukowski '14 - Corporal  
Served 2015-Present
- > John Durkin '67 - Corporal  
Served 1969-1972

- > Christopher Hartmann '10 - Corporal  
Served 2010-2014
- > Kathleen Weinzierl '79 - Corporal  
Served 1979-1982

## United States Navy

- > Paul Cumming '67  
Operations Specialist Second Class  
Served 1971-1973
- > James Dennison - E7 Chief Petty Officer  
Served 1988-2014
- > Bob Godfrey '66 - Radioman First Class  
Served 1970-1977
- > Christine Grabowski '69 - Commander  
Served 1983-2010
- > Brian Hayes - Petty Officer First Class  
Served 1982-1993
- > Robert Leopold '82 - Lieutenant  
Commander  
Served 1982-2015

- > Ryan McDonough '04
- > Christopher Meehan '79
- > Scott Stanley '78

## In Memoriam

- > Christopher Blackwell '77

- > Kevin Chiarito '83



# A SOLDIER'S PRAYER

## BY: JON M. NELSON

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
And hope my dreams are thoughtful and deep.  
I pray that tonight I'm not awoken,  
By bombs exploding and the ground shakin'.

I hope that I can get some peaceful rest,  
And wish that the next day will be blessed.  
All I want is to sleep through the night,  
So that tomorrow I'm ready for another fight.

I pray my dreams are of my family,  
As I make sacrifices to keep them free.  
May you watch over and keep them safe,  
As they wait for me and remain brave.

Dear lord please listen as I pray to you,  
And proudly defend the red, white and blue.  
I will always serve you and my country,  
And be the best person that I can be.

May it be a peaceful night without a sound,  
With no shots or bullets flying around.  
As I lay and dream of back home again,  
I'll unfold my hands after I say Amen.

**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SERVICE!**



**GOD BLESS  
AMERICA!**



