

The Greensburg Community
Development Corporation Presents:

3rd Annual



HOMETOWN HEROES

Tribute

Sunday, June 2nd, 2023
St. Clair Park in Greensburg ■ 7 pm



GREENSBURG
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION



HONORABLE SPONSORS

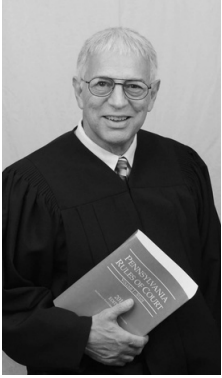


Sheriff
James Albert
Westmoreland County, PA
jamesalbertsheriff.com



Our Hometown Heroes

City of Greensburg



Westmoreland County Sheriff, **James Albert**, has been serving the City of Greensburg and its residents for over 40 years. Born on New Year's Day, James Albert was the first Westmoreland child born in 1950. He started his career in the city as a Greensburg Police Officer, and he was honored with the Life Safety Award by Mayor Robb Bell for saving a man from a burning vehicle. James went on to serve as a Westmoreland County Detective for the District Attorney's Office in the Suspicious Deaths Division and later became a Deputy Sheriff for the county. Later in life, James's passion for public service led him to the offices of the Greensburg City Council and Greensburg-Salem School Board. Most notably, James is known in the City of Greensburg as being elected to District Judge where he served in this position for 26 years. In 2019, James made his most recent transition when residents elected him to serve as the Westmoreland County Sheriff. In his new role, Sheriff Albert continues his commitment to serving Greensburg and the residents of the county.



Howard Baird was drafted into the army on July 11, 1969. He went to basic and was told he would be going to Germany. We were engaged to be married so we planned the wedding. Two weeks before coming home on leave he had orders to go to Vietnam. We still got married since it was planned. Three weeks later he left for Vietnam. After 6 months he flew to Hawaii and I flew there to meet him. We spent nine days there. He then returned to Vietnam and I flew back home. While there, he extended his time by two months and eventually got out five months early. Discharged in February, 1971. He then worked at Walworth until they closed. He then became a truck driver for 28 years until retiring. He raised two boys and five grandchildren and one great grand son. Dealing with some health issues from Agent Orange but his VA is taking very good care of him. We are grateful of all that we have. He lost some great friends in Vietnam, we are happy he made it home.



At the age of 24 in December of 1944, **Agnes Claire Burgunder** enlisted as an apprentice seaman in the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard (SPARS). She went on to serve at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC, providing administrative support, and earned the rank of Yeoman 2nd class. She was one of thousands of women to serve in the SPARS program, inspiring a whole new generation of women to military service.

In 1950, she entered the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill and became Sister Marcella Mary. Sister Marcella would translate her life of military service to the streets of the Hill District, where she spent the majority of her life providing social services to men, women, and children in poverty.

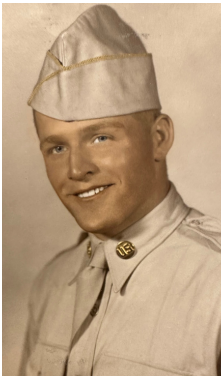
In 2022, she was declared a Military Women's Memorial Living Legend for her service as a U.S. Coast Guard SPAR from 1945-1946, to recognize her exceptional service as a patriot and trailblazer, and in honor of her 100th birthday. Sister Marcella Mary died in late 2022 at the age of 100.



Don Cavanaugh was born and raised in Greensburg and he gained notoriety as an outstanding athlete while attending Greensburg High School. He starred on both the football and basketball teams at the high school level. His prowess on the gridiron and the court earned him some impressive accolades. He was chosen to be an All-WPIAL and All-State honoree in football and an All-Section and All-WPIAL selection in basketball. Don also received over fifteen full scholarship offers to continue his athletic career in college. After two years of college, he returned home to marry his high school sweetheart Tillie Erickson. They remained blissfully married for fifty-eight years until her passing in 2013. Don served two years in the United States Army, twenty years as a police officer for the City of Greensburg and twelve years as an Investigator in the Domestic Relations Department of Westmoreland County. All those years of public service exhibit a selfless individual who was devoted to his hometown. Along with his devotion to Greensburg he is a family man at his core. His family consists of his beloved wife Tillie, two children Casey and Buffy, a daughter-in-law Cheri a son-in-law Phil and two grandsons Cory and Cade. Don was always there to support his children and grandchildren in their activities. He was their most vocal supporter! Family is and will always be the most important part of his life and legacy!



John Ciampini, known by family and friends as Jack, served through two drafts with the US Army. The 2nd time he was drafted he was stationed at Ft Polk in Louisiana. His pregnant wife Catherine, one year old daughter Barbara went with him and lived on base. Jack and family returned to Youngwood to welcome their son John and 17 months later another son, James. Jack spent his entire career at Robertshaw Controls. Jack was a talented woodworker during his retirement. He was a great son, husband, father & friend. He loved to make people laugh. Jack valued his family more than anything else in the world. His service to his country always made him proud.



Vernon Cope served as a member of the Army Corps 1952-1955 and then Army Reserves From 1955-1960. Vernon served his country in the Army Corps. In the Korean Conflict. Vernon retired from Hempfield Township, where he kept the winter streets of Hempfield twp. safe as a plow truck driver. He was an avid golfer, and a die hard Steelers Fan. He is a true hero to his family and friends. Vern loved spending time with beloved wife of 65 years, his 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 23 great grandchildren! Vern was local legend of our little neighborhood in Roseytown. He was known for chatting and always helping a neighbor in need. He was a great man indeed. He could be found at the E. Pittsburgh St. Shop n Save playing his daily numbers and chatting with all the employees. He was a lifetime member of the local Fox Hill Club and a member at the now closed Valley Green Golf Course.
Vernon C. Cope 09/08/1933-01/11/2022



David A Danko enlisted in the US Navy in 1958 and served on the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA-42) during the Cuban Missile Crisis. As a civilian, he began as an apprentice as a machine operator at Overmyer Mold and worked is way to President and CEO of Quality Mould, Inc prior to retirement. Sadly we lost the patriarch of our family on March 5, 2023.

Best know as "Pappy" he was the man who could fix anything. He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Catherine along with his children, grandchildren (whom he adored) and his grand-dogs.



Henry A. DePasquale was born and raised in Greensburg and lived here until his death in 2017. Henry enlisted in the Army during WWII. He was stationed in Reykjavik, Iceland, at the refueling base serving US military aircraft and the RAF. Henry's classification was Staff Sergeant.

After his discharge from the Army, he worked as a shoemaker for Ross Rega on Second Street. Later he accepted a position at Harvey Company in Greensburg. He continued to work part-time as a shoemaker for Lou DeFrank and Ron Mancuso, both on Pennsylvania Avenue.

He was very involved in city politics and served for many years as the democratic chairperson for 5th Ward, 2nd Precinct. He was a dedicated member of St. Paul Parish, the Knights of Columbus and the Loyal Order of Moose. He ran the concession stand and called numbers for both the K of C and Moose bingo beginning at the old Buick garage on Maple Avenue to the Moose Lodge on the corner of Maple Avenue and Otterman Street.

Henry was married to his wife Sarah for 60 years and they have 2 sons.



B. Robert (Bob) Gibson was born on May 30th, 1949 and raised in Greensburg. He was drafted into the Army at the age of 18, and was a bomb detonation expert. He was issued his papers to serve in Vietnam, but shortly after his platoon was called back. He always said he didn't consider himself a veteran because he served his time in Germany. After returning from the service he worked for Menasha, Volkswagen, and eventually was employed as a contracted compliance agent for PennDot in Bridgeville, PA. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and attending Zac Brown concerts. He was an officer at the Amvets. Out of respect for his fallen brothers he would place flags on their graves in honor of Veteran's Day. He also enjoyed Friday Night Party on the "Patio" with his friends and wife, Kathy Lantz Gibson, whom he spent the last 9 years of his life with. He cherished time spent with his step-daughters, step-grand children and in-laws. When he wasn't traveling around o different wineries, you could find him watching the Mecum car auction with his beloved dog, Angel, by his side. Sadly, Bob passed away on December 23, 2020, but his memory will always be carried on in the hearts of the many people who loved him.



Dan Holder began his Navy military career in 1991. He is a plank owner of the USS Montpelier submarine serving during the Persian Gulf War also known as Operation Desert Storm and the Bosnian War. Dan was a I/C III Petty Officer stationed in Norfolk, VA and visited ports around the world including Italy, Crete, France, and Puerto Rico before being honorably discharged in 1995. Dan currently works as a Quality Engineer for Holtec International in Turtle Creek, PA. Dan has been married to his wife Annette for the past 20 years residing in Greensburg. His hobbies include fishing/hunting, fishing rod building and trap shooting. Dan believes in giving back to his community and has been a supporter of Special Olympics and a Crowfoot Sportsmen's Club Board of Director for several years.



Richard P. Iezzi served as a Army Medic during the Korean Conflict. Shortly before his deployment, he married fellow Greensburg native Bonita Gettemy Iezzi. During his service he was attached to a machine gun unit and won numerous commendations, medals and awards. At the end of his tour of service, he was offered a field commission but he wanted to come home to the baby girl he had never met. Richard was a born salesman, and worked many years in the music industry for RCA and Columbia Records. He loved music, golf and learning new things. Richard never met a stranger, if you put him in a room of total strangers he came out knowing a fact about each person and would remember that fact years later. He dearly loved his 4 daughters, 6 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Richard married Theresa Lewis in 2015, proof that love knows no age limits. He was survived by his children and loving wife.



Nicholas Johns volunteered to serve in the United States Army Air Force in 1941 and served for four years. His postings included Mitchel Field in Hempstead Plains Long Island, New York, the Philippine Islands and the Azores. During his service he attained the rank of Master Sergeant. In 1948 Nick joined the Pennsylvania State Police. He was stationed in Washington PA and later in Greensburg. His duties included undercover detective, highway patrol, and quartermaster. He was also the president of the Fraternal Order of Police. Nick passed away in 2004 and is survived by his daughter, Jo Ellen Numerick and her husband, Barry.



In December of 1942, a 17 year old **Paul Kaufman** enlisted in the Navy. He was stationed on PC-1136 from 1944 until 1946. Paul and the crew spent time in the Pacific patrolling and escorting ships carrying supplies and troops--protecting them from submarine attacks. Paul was discharged in March, 1946 returning to his hometown, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. Upon his return, he earned his high school diploma, worked for Western Electric as a telephone equipment installer, and married his childhood sweetheart Irene Kundrat. After a brief illness, Irene died. Following Irene's death, Paul met Cynthia Zimmerman, a telephone operator. They married and moved to Greensburg PA where they lived for 61 years raising 5 children. He was Pappy to 9 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Paul volunteered at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church and was part of the "Dream Team". He enjoyed spending time with his family, reading, working puzzles, and woodworking.



Ashley Gongaware Kertes, served as the Executive Director of the Greensburg Community Development Corporation from 2018 to 2022. During her time in this role, Ashley Kertes made significant contributions to our community including the Covid-19 Relief Main Street Jump-Start Program which provided funds to small businesses struggling from the pandemic. When GCDC was determined to honor our Hometown Heroes, Ashley Kertes led the charge. She walked the streets of Greensburg and mapped out the locations of the Hometown Hero Banners downtown. GCDC honors her memory today with her very own Hometown Hero Banner which will be hung downtown for her family and friends.



Fred Mahoney was drafted in 1952. He served in the Battle of Pork Chop Hill. Fred was 20 years old when he was drafted. He received the Korean Service Medal, a Battle Star, and excellent conduct. Worked at Henry Printing for over 40 years. Fred and Polly Mahoney were married for 51 years. He has four children, ten grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. His hobbies include golfing, bingo, and playing cards.



Nick Parise joined the Navy in 1957 when he was 18 years old. After completing boot camp in Maryland and training in California at the Imperial Beach and March Air Force Base facilities, he served as a communications technician. During his four years of service, he was stationed at Skaggs Island in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as Adak, Alaska in the Aleutian Islands. Following his military service, he went to school for electronics and spent the majority of his career as a technician with Westinghouse. Nick has been married to his wife Linda for 60 years and enjoys spending time with his family, including his three children and six grandchildren. He is also a member of St. Paul Parish and the Knights of Columbus.



Edward (Ed) D. Pike served in the United States Army stationed in Zirndorf, Germany in 1966. He attended the NCO Candidate School in Bad Tölz, Germany, graduating as a Spec 5. After graduating Candidate School, Ed received orders for Vietnam where he honorably served in the 4th Infantry. In 1968, he returned home to Greensburg, PA and was a dedicated employee for PPG Industries for 30 years both in Greensburg as well as in Decatur, IL. Ed was a member of the first graduating class of Greensburg Central Catholic High School in 1963. Ed passed away on March 28, 2022. Ed survived cancer ten times, including five bouts of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma attributed to Agent Orange. He was a lifetime member of SNPJ Lodge 223 and Hecla Sportsmen's Club, and was a member of the Slickville American Legion, Post 18. His hobbies included fishing, hunting, going to camp, flower gardening, landscaping, antiques, attending estate and garage sales, putting together puzzles, wood art and drawing, attending the Carbon Reunion, and spending time with family and friends. Ed is survived by his beloved wife of 49 years, Janet; two daughters, Jennifer (Julian) Pike-Vassell and Alyssa (Clay) Kunselman; and two grandchildren, Grayson and Camilla Kunselman.



Bill Rumschock volunteered in 1966 in the army during the Vietnam War. He was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Campbell, Kentucky and Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Bill served as a medic specialist 5th. Class in Vietnam from November 1967 to December 1968 with the 101st. Airborne Division. Bill worked in the construction field as a laborer and truck driver. He has been married to his wife Nancy for 54 years and they have two daughters and three grandchildren. Bill enjoys fishing, hunting, and traveling.



SGT. James Salvatore Jr. was a US Army veteran and served with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. He was awarded Vietnam Service and Campaign ribbons, along with a bronze star, a Purple Heart and two conduct medals. James was a past Commander of VFW Post 33 and a past Commander of District 27. Also a former president of the Greensburg Joint Veterans Council. Commander Salvatore was a member of the American Legion and the AMVET'S and enjoyed fishing, football and table tennis.



James Ross Sassos volunteered his service to the Navy on June 4, 1948 at the young age of 17. He was a football star and ran track at Greensburg Salem High School. His friend coerced him to enlist. He was the only son of Sophia Banshak Sassos and Nicholas Sassos, an immigrant from Greece. Knowing they would not agree; he forged his mother's signature and enlisted. Although very angry they saw their son off and he set a sail on the on the USS Midway an aircraft carrier to fight in the Korean War. He was able to see his father's homeland and so much more during his enlistment. In an unfortunate turn he also saw one of his shipmates die from a wild cable thrown by a airplane taking off. Upon his discharge on May 21, 1952 James returned to Greensburg; he got back into the workforce, and began working at Elliot company in Jeanette, as an Expediter.

As fate would have it at a dance place called Doc's he met my beautiful mother; Angeline Ross. On February 28, 1954 James and Angeline married. They had 4 children, Marc, Milissa, Nicholas, and Amy. James and Angeline remained happily married until his death in August 1993. He was an amazing gunsmith, father, and grandfather.



John Sekuta entered the Air Force in 1960. He was stationed at Yokota AFB in Japan as an airplane mechanic. He also did work in Thailand, too. While he was there, he climbed Mt. Fuji. He was discharged in 1964 and started working for US Steel. He went to "night school" and got a degree in mechanical engineering. He eventually retired after working as a consultant from various companies. He was an accomplished outdoorsman, getting his trophy buck in 2001. He scored 129 7/8 on it, and he loved fly fishing and tying his own flies. He was married to Arlene (died 2014) and had 3 children and 2 grandsons.



Ralph Sperber was a lifelong resident of Greensburg and, in 1944, at the age of 17, left Greensburg High School to serve in the Army during WWII. He rarely spoke of the war during his lifetime. However, he was incredibly proud of being a member of the 616th Battalion of the Tenth Mountain Division, the first ski troop trained to fight in cold mountainous terrain. During the war, Ralph was a Forward Observer to help direct enemy fire and was awarded two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart for his bravery behind enemy lines. The brave men of the Tenth Mountain Division took Mt. Belvedere and Riva Ridge in the Northern Apennine Mountains, leading to the fall and capture of Northern Italy. He is profiled in a book published by Saint Vincent College Northern Appalachian Studies, *They Say There Was a War*.

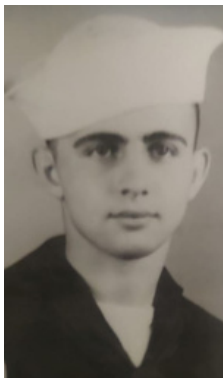
After the war, Ralph married Patricia Anderson, and they bought a house on Talbot Avenue in Greensburg. They were fortunate to have 57 years together and cherished their frequent Tenth Mountain reunion trips to Vail, Colorado, where his division trained. Ralph died in 2005, but throughout his life, he was humble and gentle, always proud of his only daughter and three granddaughters.



Charles H. Sphon Senior, "Charlie", served as Staff Sergeant and Aircraft Mechanic in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. He completed his air training command at Amarillo Air Force Base in Texas on June 21st, 1952. He had four children, three surviving.



Bob Tinsley joined the navy in Greensburg in 1966. During his 30 year career he served on 5 aircraft carriers and duty in Saigon and DaNang, South Vietnam. He was also the Recruiter-in Charge of the Greensburg Navy Recruiting office for over 5 years. He retired after 30 years of service at the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. He currently resides in Leeper, PA.



Carmen Vella Volunteered in 1944 to serve in the Navy at the age of 17. He served as a Fire Controlman 3rd Class on the U.S.S. LSM 452 in the Pacific Ocean. He was awarded the Pacific Theater Ribbon (1 Star), American Theater Ribbon and Victory Medal. Upon discharge from his service, he returned to Greensburg where he married and raised 5 children.



Our Hometown Heroes Southwest Greensburg



Charles Beck Joined the Navy in 1965-1969. Graduated from Westmoreland Community College. Married to Vickie for 52 years. Two daughters, two grandchildren, one great grandson. Moved to Bradenton Florida in 1981. Retired from Tropicana Corporation in 2008.



Rocco G "Rocky". Blasiolo was born August 12, 1915 and was a lifelong resident of SW Greensburg. He was drafted into the Navy on December 8, 1941 and served at Pearl Harbor.

Following the war he attended the University of Pittsburgh studying accounting. He worked for the IRS before opening his own accounting firm in downtown Greensburg and operated it along with his wife for 30 years.

He was a member of SW Greensburg council and Greensburg Salem school board. He won two terms as Westmoreland County Clerk of Courts. After serving in an elected office he was appointed as a controller in the state Treasury Department. He was later selected as a comptroller in the state House of Representatives, the position from which he retired.

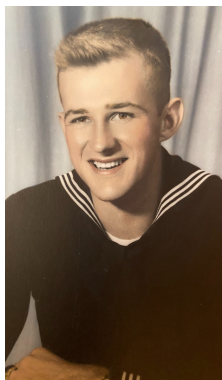
He was a member of St Paul Parish, Carbon. He was a charter life member of the Amvets Post 88 and a life member of VFW Post 33 and Knights of Columbus Council 1480, all of Greensburg.

Rocco married Mary Damato and had 4 children; 8 grandchildren; 16 great grandchildren and 1 great great granddaughter.

He passed from this life on December 8, 2016 at the age of 101.



Nicholas Ciavarra was born in Taranto, Italy. After immigrating to America his family settled in the Borough of Southwest Greensburg. Nicholas served in the US Army's 25th Infantry Division in the South Pacific. 70 years after WWII, he was awarded a Bronze Star medal (posthumously) for his heroism during the Battle of Guadalcanal. After WWII he was employed for 37 years at Elliott Company in Quality Control. Nicholas had a lifelong passion for cars. Each summer, he and his 2 granddaughters took his 1967 Dodge convertible to Idelwild's Antique Car Show & Parade. In addition to all things cars, his hobbies included an evening bowling league and growing a garden each year. The Tribune Review once wrote an article about his garden. He was also quite the swing dancer. He was a "Jack of all Trades" to many. Nicholas was the best grandfather to his four grandchildren; teaching everything from how to change the oil to picking the best fruits and vegetables. He was always there for life's big events; in the front row with the camera ready. In November 1994 Nicholas traveled to San Antonio, TX to pin his Grandson's wings on his uniform at Randolph AFB. Nicholas and his wife Marie (Constantine) Ciavarra were married for 66 years before he passed in 2011.



Harvey E. Porter, currently of Southwest Greensburg Pennsylvania, served honorably in the US Navy from 1952-1957. Porter was trained as a Telemann (radioman) and served in the Pacific at Pearl Harbor Naval Base after the Second World War. Petty officer second class Porter was rewarded for his athletic skill by serving in Special Services, where he traveled the Pacific playing baseball and basketball to entertain the troops. Mr. Porter married Anna Louise Wagner while stationed at Pearl Harbor, and is the proud father of six children raised in Southwest Greensburg, Pennsylvania as well as 13 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.



Richard Zakutney began his military career at 18. After being stationed in Canada and working as a fueller for the US Air Force, he quickly excelled, and became a part of a special forces unit. He was a sniper in Vietnam. Once he safely returned home, he worked at the Volkswagen plant, where he was a part of the pilot program, which helped shape the modern technologies we have today. He survived by his wife of 50+ years, Emma Jean Zakutney, and his two children, Richard Jr, and LeeAnn. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and any kind of activity where he could get his hands dirty. He passed in 2020, and is greatly missed.

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About the Greensburg Community Development Corporation (GCDC)

The Greensburg Community Development Corporation (GCDC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization established to assist with the development and revitalization of downtown Greensburg. For nearly 50 years, we have obtained dilapidated properties for redevelopment, secured land for new construction, and helped to attract new businesses to the City. The GCDC is not a department of the City of Greensburg, but a separately funded non-profit organization that works closely with the City to assist businesses, institutions, property owners, and residents in implementing community development programs.

- GCDC launched the COVID-19 Relief Main Street Jump-Start Program in 2020. This program awarded grants of \$10,000 or less to 36 City of Greensburg small businesses to aid in their recovery from the pandemic. A combined total of \$230,000 was awarded to Greensburg small businesses in Rounds 1 & 2 of the program.
- GCDC provides matching grants for façade, storefront, sign upgrades and improvements through our Façade Improvement Grant Program. Since the program's launch in 2007, the GCDC has awarded over \$175,000 to City businesses and property owners who've made improvements to their commercial façade.
- GCDC facilitated the joint agreement of the Greensburg-Salem School District, Westmoreland County, and City of Greensburg to implement LERTA, a 10 year tax abatement program, serving as an incentive to developers to build new and renovate older properties within the city. Developers committing to the project donate a portion of their abated tax to a fund enabling the purchase and upgrade of older properties within the city, called the Greensburg Revitalization Fund (G-Fund).
- GCDC launched Greensburg's inaugural Restaurant Week, highlighting the diverse dining options within the City of Greensburg and promoting local small businesses. This summer's Greensburg Restaurant Week will take place August 20 - 29, 2021!
- GCDC introduced the Greensburg Revitalization Fund (G-Fund) Grant Program, implemented to assist with revitalization efforts of the City of Greensburg including, but not limited to, acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, public infrastructure and programs related to implementation of the City's revitalization strategy.

\$230,000

awarded to City
businesses impacted
by COVID-19



\$1.5 MILLION

of private investment
leverage supported by
financial assistance from
the GCDC in 2020



\$175,000

awarded to business
and property owners for
improvements made to
building facades



\$55,000

awarded to business and
property owners as part of
GCDC's Greensburg
Revitalization Fund
Grant Program




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