



P.O. BOX 953663
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Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida

Newsletter

April - June 2021

Deployment to Bay County

On May 13, 2021, the Volusia County Democratic Veterans Caucus (VCDVC) deployed to Bay County by loading a 22-foot Penske truck full of household items, furniture and clothing for the residents of Bay County impacted by two hurricanes in the past three years and a recent tornado. In addition, the VCDVC delivered over 200 toiletry bags, socks and underwear as part of a project to meet the needs of young people in Bay County displaced by the storms. The project was initiated by Danny Fuqua, Vice President of the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF) and former President of the Volusia County DVCF, in coordination with Bay County DVCF President Reuben Sparks, the State DVCF and other county caucuses in Lake, Osceola, and Marion County.



In 2019, under the direction of videographer and Palm Beach DVCF President Carlton Cartwright, he began documenting the plight of homeless veterans in Bay County. The VCDVC, Volusia County Democratic Executive Committee, Democratic Women's Club of Florida and the State DVCF completed four different deployments to Bay County delivering food, clothing and household goods to the people who had been devastated by hurricane Michael on October 10, 2018.

The Volusia County DVCF funded a project to provide toiletry bags for 200 high school students displaced by the hurricane. The Volusia County DVCF, other county veteran caucuses of the state DVCF and local Democratic supporters responded with donations used to purchase necessities like shampoo, soap, personal hygiene items, deodorant, hand sanitizer and combs. Dentists in the area provided toothbrushes and toothpaste. Additional funds raised allowed VCDVC to purchase socks and underwear for the students. Also, funds were raised to collect toiletry items for veterans in the area.

Once the collected items arrived in Bay County, Rebuild Bay County, Inc., a non-profit organization organized to aid in hurricane Michael recovery took over distribution of the items. All the items were given to local organizations to distribute to needy citizens. Volunteers gathered to unload the truck and distribute the items to churches, organizations, students and veterans.

On behalf of the citizens of Bay County, the Bay County Democratic Veterans Caucus would like to say thank you to the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida, the Volusia County Democratic Veterans Caucus and all the county caucuses and individuals that participated in the collection, deployment, unloading and delivery to Bay County. The thoughts and the items were needed and appreciated. We hope that we can help others when their need arises also.



MEET THE NEW DVCF LEADERSHIP

President Elena McCullough



Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF) President, Elena McCullough was born and raised in the Dominican Republic. At 16 her family sent her to live with an aunt and uncle in the United States for an opportunity at a better life. Elena went to the local public high school, quickly learned English, and earned her high school diploma. On the week of her 18th birthday, she joined the US Coast Guard (USCG). She served for 24 years, eventually going to Officer Candidate School, then she retired as a Lieutenant in 2004. Within three years of joining, she became a US citizen. In 2006 she earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from Excelsior College.

Elena was very proud to serve her new country in the USCG. While enlisted she worked primarily in administration and law enforcement. As an officer she worked in Marine Safety. She was stationed in Virginia, Alaska, Puerto Rico, California, Alabama, Tampa and Miami. The highlight of her career was in 1998, she served as a USCG Liaison Officer during a major drug interdiction operation with multiple Caribbean countries including the Dominican Republic. While stationed in Miami she coordinated a major plane crash exercise with over 100 agencies and planned maritime security efforts for the 2003 World Trade Organization meeting.

Since retiring from the Coast Guard, she has volunteered for Democratic candidates specializing in grass-root efforts. She worked tirelessly by phone banking and door-to-door canvassing in Pasco County to elect Barak Obama in the 2008 Presidential election. In 2010 she ran for Florida's State House District 61. In 2011-2012 she worked in President Obama's re-election campaign. Elena's memorable achievements during the 2012 OFA campaign include:

- Receiving a personal phone call from President Obama
- Introduction of President Obama in June 2012 at a rally at Hillsborough Community College
- Serving as the OFA Hispanic surrogate for the Tampa area
- Multiple appearances on TV and radio campaign commercials
- Honorably served as a 2012 Florida elector in the Electoral College

In 2013, Elena was the acting Florida State Director of Mi Familia Vota and led efforts to collect 1500 pledge cards in support of immigration reform, and she helped coordinate 7500 calls in support of immigration reform made by youth volunteers, and registered 150 voters in a three-month period.

She has continued to work for Democratic candidates, volunteering in the 2016 Presidential campaign and numerous local campaigns in Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Naples, Jacksonville, and South Florida. In 2018 she worked with the Florida Democratic Party to re-elect US Senator Bill Nelson and State Senator Janet Cruz. In the 2020 campaign, she served as an at-large Biden delegate representing Florida at the Democratic National Convention. She also was selected to participate in an in-person veteran's roundtable with candidate Biden at Hillsborough Community College. At the time President Trump was trying to defund Social Security by ending the Payroll Tax. Elena's question for candidate Biden was how did he plan to protect and preserve Social Security for current and future retirees. He gave a detailed answer that showed his strong support for Social Security. Elena continues her successful volunteer work with the DVCF.



Vice President Danny Fuqua

Newly elected Vice President of the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF); Danny Fuqua is a retired Army veteran with 29 years of service, who served a tour of duty in Iraq from November 2010-November 2011. He received the Global War on Terrorism Award. He has resided in Volusia County for over 30 years. Danny and his wife Muriel have two children and three grandchildren. A double-alum, Danny received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and an M.B.A. from Liberty University. Professionally, Danny has spent countless hours leading financial planning seminars, specializing in budgeting, debt management, and homeownership.

Danny was President of the Volusia County Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (VCDVCF) from January, 2019 – January, 2021. He is active in the local Daytona Beach Democrat Club. He is a member of the Volusia County Democratic Executive Committee Steering Committee and

the Democrat Black Caucus of Florida. He has been active with the Volusia Democratic Women's Club since 2019.

Danny is Co-Pastor of Word and Praise Family Church; Inc. and he is a member of the Black Clergy Alliance.

In 2016 Danny was Chairman of the Midtown Neighborhood Association Daytona Beach, FL. Also, in 2019 he served as the Co-Chairman of the Midtown Redevelopment Board for the City of Daytona Beach.

He received the Florida Commendation Medal from Governor Jeb Bush and the Outstanding Community Service Award – Volusia County.

Vice President Fuqua is also President of Black Pilots of America (BPA) for the State of Florida.

Danny went on two trips to Bay County in 2019 and one in 2021 in conjunction with the VCDVCF to assist the communities that were affected by Hurricane Michael.



Secretary Hazel Gillis

Newly elected Secretary, Hazel Gillis of the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF) has over 50 years of experience in dealing with the public through positions of increasing responsibilities and diverse functions for the federal government. Hazel Gillis' background is in hiring, training and supervising personnel. She graduated from Jones College as a Paralegal with a Bachelor of Science Degree, Summa Cum Laude. She is familiar with EEO policies and procedures.

Secretary Gillis is heavily involved in the community and holds many hats in the Florida Democratic Party and the Duval County Democratic Executive Committee. For Duval County she serves as the Precinct Committeewoman in District 7 and she was the State Committeewoman.

Hazel is the President of the James Weldon Johnson Branch of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History (ASALH). Hazel's past experiences include President of the Duval County Democratic Black Caucus for four years and the 2016 President of First Coast Tiger Bay Club, Inc.

Hazel's secretarial experiences include Recording Secretary Duval County Democratic Black Caucus, Recording Secretary James Weldon Johnson Branch of ASALH, and in 2018 Recording Secretary First Coast Tiger Bay Club, Inc. Currently she is also the Recording Secretary for the Democratic Black Caucus of Florida.



Treasurer Marian Williams

Treasurer Marian Williams of the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida (DVCF), is also the Chair of the Florida Democratic Party (FDP) Committee of Clubs, Organizations and Caucuses. It certified 300 clubs & caucuses for 67 Florida counties in 2019.

Marian is a founding member and former Vice President of the DVCF. She is the current Membership, Certification, and Bylaws Chair of the DVCF and she is the former Secretary of the DVCF.

She is the former Congressional Chair of CD7 and the former State Committeewoman of Seminole County. Marian is President of the Seminole County Democratic Black Caucus, President of the Democratic Women's Club of Seminole County and President of Central Florida

Democratic Club.

Marian was elected Delegate for Joe Biden in 2020, Hillary Clinton in 2016 and Barack Obama in 2008, and 2012. Marian is the President-elect of the Seminole County Branch of the NAACP and she was elected Delegate to the NAACP National Convention in 2020.

Immediate Past President Phil Giorno

Immediate Past President of the DVCF, Phil Giorno was born into a military family at Fort Bragg, NC. He grew up living on military bases around the world, including Okinawa, Germany and England, until he volunteered for the service in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War.

He graduated from the University of Maryland with a B.S. in Business and Public Administration with help from the G.I. Bill after his military service. After some early Information Systems employment, including the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve in Washington, D.C., he moved back to Deltona and became a Programmer Systems Analyst for Volusia County. During this time, he married and had two daughters, Leah, 28, living in England, and Melissa, 26, living in Australia.

He left his position as a Senior Program Systems Analyst to run for election to the Volusia County Council, serving as the District 5 County Councilman and as the first Councilman-at-Large to be elected from the west side of the county. During this time, he was elected the County Council Chairman by his peers. He worked to establish the county-wide library system and secured donated lands for the libraries in Deltona and DeBary. He also voted for the establishment of many parks, including Gemini Springs.

He established a consulting firm, Phil Giorno & Associates, serving as a liaison between private industry and government.

Phil has served through his volunteer work with many community groups as well. He has been a member of the Lake Helen/Cassadaga/Deltona American Legion for 31 years. He has also been a member of the VFW for 25 years and is a member of the Disabled American Veterans. He has also been President of the Lake Helen Jaycees and he is a Silver-level Member of the NAACP. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Volusia/Flagler Boys & Girls Club and on the Board of Directors of the Southwest Volusia YMCA. He was the Chair of the Volusia County Democratic Party for thirteen years, until 2013, a record state-wide. He served as the President of the Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida from January, 2013 – January, 2021 and Vice Chair of the Florida Democratic Party from 2017 – 2021. Prior to Covid-19, he enjoyed touring the world. Phil is currently President of the Volusia County DVCF.

DVCF RETREAT

February 21-23, 2020
Orlando Marriott Lake Mary
Pictures by Carlton Cartwright



County Caucus Leaders with Charters



Guest Speaker Dr. JJ Walcutt



Reception-goers enjoying Daniel "Saxman" Fuqua performance



Maritza Vazquez, Barbara Grimm and Jewel Dickson



Rebecca Wilkinson and Jeff Wilkinson



Richard and Lillian Lockette at Dinner



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