

From: Governor's Press Office [Governor'sPressOffice@eog.myflorida.com]
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Governor Scott and Volunteer Florida Present Champion of Service Awards



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Today, during a meeting of the Florida Cabinet, Governor Rick Scott and Volunteer Florida Chief Executive Officer Vivian Myrtetus awarded Donna Burdett, Bill Filipsic, Curt Harman, and Gene Kelley with the Volunteer Florida Champion of Service Award, Florida's official statewide volunteer recognition.

Governor Scott said, "I am proud to recognize these veterans who, after serving their country, now dedicate their time to serving their communities. Their commitment to service and their compassion for helping others is remarkable. I am honored to present them with the Champion of Service Award today."

Volunteer Florida CEO Vivian Myrtetus said, "Volunteer Florida is honored to recognize these volunteers. We are grateful for the opportunity to celebrate them and their outstanding service to others, throughout the State of Florida and across the country."

About the Champion of Service Awardees:

Donna Burdett (Panama City, FL)

Donna is a U.S. Navy veteran who has served with Team Rubicon, an international non-profit disaster response organization for military veterans and first responders. Donna helps on almost all operations in the region and often takes care of logistical needs to support those operations. When she's not volunteering with disaster response operations, Donna spends her time recruiting and growing the volunteer community in Florida. Her primary roles with Team Rubicon include Logistics Section Chief and volunteer motivator. Donna is constantly inspiring others to get out and serve their communities. She is also an instructor of Team Rubicon's Core Operations course, where she teaches volunteers how to serve correctly, quickly, and safely.

Bill Filipic (Jacksonville, FL)

Bill is a retired Navy Chief and is serving his first year with Team Rubicon. Bill has served over 200 hours since Team Rubicon launched Operation Sawgrass in response to Hurricane Irma. Throughout this operation, Bill led assessment efforts in Clay and Duval Counties before stepping into a field leadership position as Operations Section Chief (OSC). As OSC, Bill was in charge of managing Crisis Cleanup work orders and assigning strike teams to complete them. Bill was able to match the needs of the community with the skills of the volunteers in order to make the biggest impact for the community as quickly as possible. Bill especially believes in helping veterans achieve a holistic transition into their home communities. In addition to serving with Team Rubicon, Bill also volunteers with other veteran organizations in Jacksonville.

Curt Harman (Wesley Chapel, FL)

Curt Harman is a U.S. Navy veteran from Tampa. Curt volunteers with Team Rubicon to train, mentor, and manage volunteers. Most recently, Curt has served in Houston, Texas, and Collier County in Florida following Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Curt is still serving Florida communities in need and has been doing so for more than eight weeks. He has recently led a reconnaissance effort to Highlands County to determine how Team Rubicon can use volunteers to help the area with disaster recovery.

Gene Kelley (Tallahassee, FL)

Gene is a veteran who has volunteered with the Tallahassee Salvation Army in Tallahassee since 1985. Following Hurricane Harvey, he deployed to Texas. Upon returning, Gene stepped up to serve in his own community for Hurricane Irma. The Tallahassee Corps was asked to fill an immediate need by providing meals at multiple shelters in Leon, Wakulla, and Gadsden counties. Gene helped prepare and serve meals for displaced residents and evacuees. He also delivered and provided meals to first responders as well as at several community comfort stations in the Tallahassee area. Gene is the heart and soul of what The Salvation Army embodies – servant leadership and a willingness to think outside of the box to help meet community needs.

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Volunteer Florida is the Governor's lead agency for volunteerism and national service in Florida, administering more than \$32 million in federal, state, and local funding to deliver high-impact national service and volunteer programs in Florida. Volunteer Florida promotes and encourages volunteerism to meet critical needs across the state. Volunteer Florida also serves as Florida's lead agency for

volunteers and donations before, during, and after disasters. For more information, visit: www.volunteerflorida.org.