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WPAOG ANNOUNCES 2016 DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

WEST POINT, NY: February 11, 2016 – The West Point Association of Graduates (WPAOG) has named the 2016 recipients of the Distinguished Graduate Award.

Since 1992, this annual award has been bestowed upon those West Point graduates whose character, distinguished service and stature draw wholesome comparison to the qualities for which West Point strives, in keeping with its motto: “Duty, Honor, Country.”

The awards will be presented in a ceremony at West Point on May 17, 2016. The 2016 Distinguished Graduate Award recipients are:



Louis Gross '54 – Referring to the impact of Louis Gross on West Point, LTG Robert L. Caslen Jr. '75, the 59th Superintendent, wrote, “What he has done is literally etched in stone and bronze.” Caslen was speaking of the buildings on post that Gross participated in building: the Jewish Chapel, the Gross Center (gymnastics facility), and 18 residences for athletic coaches. But as LTG (R) William Lennox '71, West Point's 56th Superintendent, said, “Mr. Gross is more than a donor of buildings; he plays a part in the lives of cadets and faculty.” For example, Gross hosts a football tailgate, which Director of Athletics Boo Corrigan called “an institution on game days,” for approximately 600 cadets and West Point guests. He has also supported cadet religious activities through the renovation of Building 147 into the Multi-Faith Religious Center, repair of the floor of the Catholic Chapel, and serving as President—and then Chairman—of the Jewish Chapel Fund. Regarding all of his contributions to West Point, the West Point Society of New York said, “His record will never be replicated.”

John C. Bahnsen Jr. '56 – Warrior, staff officer, mentor, author, motivational speaker, and West Point supporter, BG (R) John C. “Doc” Bahnsen Jr. has played many roles in his six decades since graduating, but each has been accomplished adhering to the ideals of West Point. The most highly decorated member of his Class and a member of the Army Aviation Hall of Fame, Bahnsen served two tours in Vietnam and commanded a platoon, a troop and a squadron. He received 18 decorations for valor and two Purple Hearts. As a General Officer he served as the Assistant Division Commander of the 2nd Armored Division and as the Chief of Staff for U.S. Combined Forces Command (Korea) and III Corps (Fort Hood, TX). A loyal fan of Army West Point Rugby, Bahnsen has presented a pistol to the team captain for going on 20 years. For just as long, he was a mainstay at the Academy giving pro bono lectures to cadets on duty, history, and leadership. According to LTG (R) Dave Palmer '56, the 53rd Superintendent, “Our Army is still today liberally sprinkled with graduates who were inspired by him to a lifetime of service.”

Joseph B. Anderson Jr. '65 – As an Army officer, business leader, and WPAOG volunteer, Joseph B. “Joe” Anderson has inculcated, personified, and radiated West Point's values. Anderson first came to “fame” as a platoon leader in Vietnam when he was featured in the 1967 documentary *The Anderson Platoon*, which won an Emmy and the Oscar for Best Documentary Film. Then, after stints in the Department of Social Sciences at USMA and as a White House Fellow, he started a 13-year business career at General Motors, rising to become General Director of its Body Hardware Business Unit. In 1992, he became an entrepreneur, eventually becoming the Chairman and CEO of TAG Holdings, LLC, which for several years was among the top five largest black-owned business in the United States according to *Black Enterprise* magazine. As a volunteer, Anderson has served WPAOG in various capacities since 1974, and is now a Diversity Strategic Advisor to the Superintendent at USMA, helping to establish the West Point Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity. According to USMA

Admissions, his efforts have contributed to a 23 percent increase in applications from African-American students over the past five years.

William P. Foley II '67 – A successful entrepreneur and businessman in several industries (real estate, specialty finance, and even vineyards and wine), William P. “Bill” Foley credits West Point for giving him the education and military skills to lead, make decisions, prioritize and multitask. He used his West Point experience to eventually become Chairman, CEO and President of Fidelity National Financial, Inc., one of *Forbes* magazine’s “26 Best Managed Companies in the U.S.” His commitment to West Point’s core principles has also encouraged him to give back in numerous ways: the Foley Family Foundation supports after-school programs for underprivileged children, the Folded Flag Foundation assists with the educational needs of family members of deceased service members, and the Rock Creek Cattle Company hosts disabled veterans on its 30,000-acre Montana ranch. Furthermore, Foley’s philanthropy has revolutionized USMA athletics with the Foley Indoor Athletic Complex and the Foley-Enners-Nathe Lacrosse Center (now under construction). “I know of no other graduate who has done so much for so long in so many different areas to support West Point,” says Jodie Glore ’69, former Chairman of WPAOG.

Richard A. Cody '72 – A member of the Army Aviation Hall of Fame whose ‘Gathering of Eagles’ portrait is in the Hall of Heroes at Air Force Education Command at Maxwell Air Force Base, GEN (R) Richard A. Cody logged more than 5,000 hours of flight time during his 36-year Army career, 70 percent of it spent with troop units. He led the effort to stand up the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (“The Night Stalkers”) in 1981, he commanded the AH-64 Apache Battalion that fired the first shots by American Forces in Operation Desert Storm, and he was the first Army Aviator to serve as the 31st Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (2004-08). Kenneth O. Preston, the 13th Sergeant Major of the Army, called Cody “a great commander, leader, and soldier’s soldier.” After retiring, Cody continues to support those he once led. He is Chairman of the Board for Homes for Our Troops, a charity that has built over 200 custom houses for severely wounded veterans, and runs Operation Flying Heroes, which has flown more than 300 wounded warriors in his privately owned OH-6A helicopter and Cessna 206 fixed-wing aircraft.

Keith B. Alexander '74 – GEN (R) Keith B. Alexander had a long and distinguished Army career focused on technology and intelligence. As a captain, he completed analysis work that led to the first-ever Army Intelligence Plan, which was used to deter the Soviet threat during the Cold War. As a colonel, he played a crucial role in improving battlefield visualization through intelligence. After assignments with U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command and as the Army’s G2, he became the first Intelligence officer to achieve the rank of general. In 2005, he was named Director of the National Security Agency, where, according to GEN (R) David Petraeus ’74, “...his initiatives were path-breaking and truly critical to Operation Iraqi Freedom.” He was also the founding commander of U.S. Cyber Command. According to GEN (R) Martin Dempsey ’74, the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Alexander “has been our true north in developing our Armed Forces and Nation’s cyber security and intelligence capabilities,” and former Vice President Dick Cheney said, “General Alexander was one of the very best officers I worked with in my 44 years in government.”

About the West Point Association of Graduates

The West Point Association of Graduates (WPAOG), is among America’s oldest educational alumni associations. Founded in 1869, the Association was established “to cherish the memories of [its] Alma Mater, and to promote the social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates,” many of whom had recently fought against each other in the Civil War. WPAOG has evolved into a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to furthering the ideals and promoting the welfare of West Point, and to serving and supporting the more than 50,000 living West Point graduates. Its philanthropic pursuits maintain a Margin of Excellence for cadets attending the United States Military Academy. For more information see WestPointAOG.org.

About West Point

The United States Military Academy at West Point is a four-year, co-educational, federal, liberal arts college located 50 miles north of New York City. It was founded in 1802 as America's first college of engineering and continues today as one of our nation's premier leader-development institutions, consistently ranked among top colleges in the country. Its mission remains constant—to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the U. S. Army. For more information, go to WestPoint.edu.

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