

## Skip Delano -- VFP Board Candidate Questionnaire

### **1) Please briefly describe why you would like to be on the VFP board and what you believe you'll bring to the organization as a board member.**

I am 100% dedicated to VFP's Save Our VA campaign to Stop Privatization of VA healthcare. Our SOVA campaign hit a high point in June when we mounted the first coordinated SOVA protests ever at more than a dozen VA hospitals across the country but our battle has just begun. The SOVA campaign has been loosely coordinated for the past several years through VFP's SOVA Working Group and built by a handful of SOVA Action Teams or individuals based in a half dozen VFP chapters. VFP's Board of Directors has provided little support for the SOVA campaign and if elected to the VFP Board of Directors (BOD) I believe I can insure that the SOVA campaign becomes part of VFP's future agenda and equally important, with the support of the BOD and VFP's Executive Director Garrett Reppenhagen we can take the SOVA campaign to each of VFP's 140 chapters in the country. VFP is the only national veterans organization fighting to Stop Privatization of VA Healthcare. I believe as a VFP Board member I can help strengthen our SOVA campaign and at the same time, build VFP membership by recruiting hundreds of new veterans into our organization.

Like many VFP members, as a young soldier in Vietnam I saw the futility of using America's military power to enforce our country's will on the Vietnamese people. It was a mistaken foreign policy then, and I have spoken out and acted since then to educate my fellow Americans to the true causes of America's wars, most often in the interest of billionaires and their corporations. I am fully committed to fighting to abolish war as and dismantle America's military empire around the world.

### **2) What do you do, or did you do if retired, for a living?**

After serving in the Army from 1967-70, I worked in a variety of jobs including the postal worker in NYC, a coal miner in West Virginia and a high school social studies teacher in NYC until I retired in 2017.

### **3) Have you served on any non-profit boards before?**

Yes. Since moving in 2003 to Morningside Gardens, a self-governing housing cooperative of 1,000 apartments in six-21-story buildings in West Harlem, I have been a community activist including most recently serving on two nonprofit boards. I was the elected Chair for four consecutive years (2014-2018) of a nonprofit group of Morningside Gardens shareholders -- Morningside Gardens Cooperators Assembly (MGCA) -- which promotes community activities. In 2018, I was elected to a three-year term to the 11-person Board of Directors of our housing cooperative -- Morningside Heights Housing Corporation (MHHC). The Board governs our cooperative and administers a \$19 million budget. Our coop is managed and governed by an 11-person Board of Directors (BOD). I served as the Board Secretary.

### **4) If so, what board committee(s) were you on?**

In MGCA I chaired monthly meetings, was the co-editor of a monthly newsletter, *The Morningside Gardens News*, and served on four MGCA Committees -- Morningside Employees Holiday Fund, Welcome Newcomers, Morningside Home Tour, and Morningside Winter Coat Drive. Currently I participate in three MHHC Board Committees -- Finance, Personnel and Tenant Selection.

**5) Has your work or non-profit board experience included any responsibilities in any of these areas?**

**Human resource/personnel** -- As Chair of MGCA, I actively recruited shareholders to attend MGCA meetings and participate in MGCA Committees. As editor of MGCA's newsletter, I wrote many articles and worked with a variety of shareholders to get them to write stories about themselves or their neighbors.

**Legal** -- As a MHHC Board member, we constantly encounter legal issues when managing an \$18 million budget including awarding and managing contracts, delivering services to shareholders, and observing MHHC's Bylaws and House Rules.

**Development/fundraising** -- I was Chair of MGCA in 2015 when it switched from being funded by the MHHC BOD to becoming independently-funded. I led the effort to raise our own funds by door-to-door direct-mail appeals to shareholders and a Morningside Home Tour of renovated apartments to raise our annual MGCA budget of \$7,000. MGCA successfully raises its own funds annually now.

**6) When was your military service?**

Under pressure from the draft and after talking to an Army recruiter, I joined the Army in 1967. I completed basic training at Fort Bragg, NC, and Advanced training in using and repairing chemical warfare equipment at Fort McClellan, AL. I was sent to Vietnam in 1968 with the 10<sup>th</sup> Chemical Platoon which was assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. We were stationed at Phuoc Vinh, Cu Chi and Phu Bai. In 1969 I returned to Fort McClellan a Sergeant and was assigned to be an instructor at the Chemical School. Along with other Vietnam veterans who opposed the war, we began publishing an underground newspaper in the Fall of 1969 we called *Left Face*. We distributed our newspaper to our fellow GIs, on and off base, and established an antiwar group -- *GIs and WACs United Against the War* -- to build an antiwar movement among Fort McClellan soldiers and linked up with the GI antiwar movement beyond our base as well as the national antiwar movement. When I left the military in 1970 I continued to work to support the GI antiwar movement, first at Fort McClellan and then in the *United States Servicemen's Fund* (USSF), a support organization including funding for the GI antiwar movement. Later in 1972 I joined and worked with the *Vietnam Veterans Against the War* in NYC and helped lead the East Coast contingent of *The Last Patrol* to protest at the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami.

**7) Where do you live?**

I live in West Harlem in the borough of Manhattan in New York City,

**8) Do you belong to any racial or ethnic minority?**

No.

**9) Please describe some of the tasks/projects/responsibilities you've undertaken for VFP.**

In preparation for returning to Vietnam with VFP's 2018 Vietnam Tour in March. I joined Veterans for Peace in the Summer of 2017, attended the VFP Convention in Chicago and began attending Chapter 34 monthly meetings in NYC. On my return from Vietnam I volunteered to coordinate the Chapter's Save Our VA Action Team and serve on the Chapter Coordinating Committee. I have continued to serve in those capacities since then

although my main activities have centered on developing the local and national Save Our VA campaigns. Over the summer we held a series of meetings with VFP members to educate ourselves about VA healthcare and the issue of privatization. We began producing SOVA flyers and other literature which we took to the 2018 VFP Convention where it was distributed at SOVA tables. I worked with SOVA activists from around the country to organize the SOVA Workshop at the Convention and moderated the event. By the Fall of 2018 we were ready to reach out to veterans and VA workers with our message and began leafleting at the Manhattan and Bronx VAs, building for our November Save Our VA Town Hall. Almost a dozen SOVA activists distributed nearly 10,000 leaflets. The Town Hall was successful with almost 100 people attending. At the beginning of 2019 we worked with other SOVA activists nationally to submit to the federal Register our objections to the MISSION Act's proposed access standards and when those regulations went into effect in June we mounted the first coordinated SOVA protests ever at more than a dozen VA hospitals including here in Manhattan. Our SOVA campaign to Stop Privatization of VA healthcare has just begun and I am committed to seeing it through until we achieve victory.