

**CONNECTICUT  
VETERANS  
LEGAL  
CENTER**



14TH ANNUAL

*Connecticut Veterans Legal Center*  
**SALUTING ★ SERVICE**

**NOVEMBER 9TH | 6:00 - 10:00P**

**NEW HAVEN LAWN CLUB**

193 Whitney Avenue  
New Haven, Connecticut

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**CINDY JOHNSON**

FOUNDERS AWARD

**JASON DEVIVA, PH.D.**

CAPT. CELINE A. FINN AWARD

**MINORITY VETERANS OF AMERICA**

VETERANS JUSTICE AWARD



**CONNECTICUT  
VETERANS  
LEGAL  
CENTER**



**OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to provide free legal assistance to veterans who are in recovery from homelessness, mental illness, and substance abuse to help them overcome legal barriers to housing, healthcare, and income.

CVLC Clients Joe and Kathy.  
Photo by David Apuzzo.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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Jeffrey Udell

Alison Weir



# AWARD DINNER PROGRAM

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## **The Star-Spangled Banner**

Performed by Finn.theScientist

- DINNER BREAK -

## **Founders Award presented to Cindy Johnson**

Presented by CVLC Founder Margaret Middleton

## **Captain Celine A. Finn Award presented to Jason DeViva, Ph.D.**

Presented by Debbie Deegan, Errera Center Director

## **Veterans Justice Award presented to Minority Veterans of America**

Accepted by Founder and CEO Lindsay Church  
Presented by Alison Weir, CVLC Executive Director

## **Presentation by John "Stew" Lahey**

World War II Marine Corps Veteran  
Introduced by Janice Wolf, CVLC Staff Attorney

## **Performance by Art of Huckleberry**

Special thank you to **Cold Spring Brook Farm** for donating tonight's centerpieces, to **BLOSSOM Shop** for providing our take home chocolate treat, and to the entire staff of the **New Haven Lawn Club** for the exceptional service.

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## **CHAZ SALUTING SERVICE MC**

Thank you to **Chaz of Chaz & AJ in the morning** for joining us as our MC.



## **WELCOME FROM ALISON WEIR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Welcome to Connecticut Veterans Legal Center's 14th Annual Saluting Service Celebration**, where we recognize those champions who serve our nation's heroes by helping remove the barriers to safe and affordable housing, access to health care, and stable and reliable income to live healthy, productive lives with dignity!

Tonight we are honoring a VA clinical provider who is noted for going **above-and-beyond** for veterans living with trauma, an attorney who committed her life to serving veterans from the time she was in law school, and an organization founded to **give voice to the most marginalized veterans** to ensure that they receive all the rights and privileges they have earned through their service.

It's hard to believe it's already been a year since my first Saluting Service as Executive Director, but I am even more thrilled to be here with you this year than last, and I hope you enjoy the evening. **Thank you for your support** and for joining us in saluting service!

**ALISON WEIR**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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*Thank you **Joseph Merritt & Company** for donating the printing of the Saluting Service program book.*

*Thank you to all of the supporters who made donations.*

*as of October 25, 2023*



*Rachel B.G. Sherman, Esq.  
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## **CINDY JOHNSON** **FOUNDERS AWARD**

**Cindy Johnson** worked at Connecticut Veterans Legal Center for over 11 years as a Staff Attorney, Director of Operations, and, eventually, Deputy Director. She fell in love with CVLC as an intern in 2010 while attending UCONN Law – learning how to be a veteran’s attorney from CVLC’s founders: Margaret Middleton and Howard Udell. Prior to becoming an attorney, Cindy worked 25 years in the software industry and brought those skills to CVLC – creating and updating the client management system to allow us to better-serve veterans. Cindy is admitted to practice before the US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC). She served on the CT Veterans and Military Advocacy Section of the CT State Bar for ten years and taught a Veterans Benefit Advocacy Clinic at UCONN law.

Cindy left CT and CVLC to be closer to her grandchildren in North Carolina where she continues to serve veterans as a Staff Attorney at the National Veterans Legal Services Program.

Photo of Cindy Johnson by Joel Callaway.

### **ABOUT THE FOUNDERS AWARD**

In honor of our Founders **Margaret Middleton** and **Howard Udell**, this award is given to an individual or organization whose enduring leadership in the fight for veterans’ legal rights serves as an inspiration.





## **JASON DEVIVA, PH.D.**

### ***THE CAPTAIN CELINE A. FINN AWARD***

**Jason DeViva** is a clinical psychologist who works with the VA Connecticut Health Care System as part of the posttraumatic stress disorder clinical team. He is co-director of the PTSD Clinical Team and a PTSD mentor for the New England region Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 1), and the military sexual trauma coordinator for VA Connecticut and the VISN 1 MST point of contact. He is a national lead trainer for the VA's dissemination of cognitive-behavioral therapy for insomnia and a local trainer and consultant in the VA's dissemination of cognitive processing therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder. He also serves as an associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry of the Yale School of Medicine.

He has worked in the VA system for 19 years, treating veterans of all eras with posttraumatic stress disorder and anxiety disorders.

Photo of Jason DeViva courtesy Yale School of Medicine.

## **ABOUT THE CAPTAIN CELINE A. FINN AWARD**

In memory of **US Navy Captain Celine A. Finn**, who worked tirelessly on behalf of her fellow veterans and service members for her entire life, this award is given to recognize selfless service to veterans' holistic needs.



The logo for minorityvets, featuring a stylized 'v' icon in red and blue followed by the text 'minorityvets' in a sans-serif font.

## MINORITY VETERANS OF AMERICA

### *VETERANS JUSTICE AWARD*

**Minority Veterans of America** was established in 2017 to create belonging and advance equity for minority and underrepresented veterans. A proven leader in national advocacy, in 2023 Minority Veterans of America has led the fight for equitable treatment of minority service members, veterans, and their families in the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs as well as other initiatives to protect all veterans' access to healthcare.

Read more about Minority Veterans of America at [minorityvets.org](https://minorityvets.org).

Accepted by **Lindsay Church**, Co-Founder and Executive Director, on behalf of Minority Veterans of America.

Photo of Lindsay Church courtesy of Minority Veterans of America.

## ABOUT THE VETERANS JUSTICE AWARD

In recognition of the work that still needs to be done, this award is given to an individual or organization who has shown unwavering dedication, advocacy, and leadership to advocate for the rights of all veterans.





CONNECTICUT  
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# THE RIDE IS BACK

**June 2024**

**Fairfield County**

**We are thrilled to announce that *The Ride* will be back in person in 2024.**

After three years of virtual running, walking, and riding, we are excited to bring *The Ride* back in all of its former glory.

**Want to get involved?**

Contact Patrick J Dunn at  
[pdunn@ctveteranslegal.org](mailto:pdunn@ctveteranslegal.org).

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## ART OF HUCKLEBERRY



### FINN.THESCIENTIST

**Finn.theScientist**, a CT native, sees their music as a sharing on how self, present culture, and the past informs creation. Whether it is performing, producing, or songwriting, Finn's creativity is meant to focus on the authentic and fantastical experiences of life through all Black American Music.



### GRANT EAGLESON

**Grant Eagleson** is a CT based multi-instrumentalist & composer. Specializing in jazz trumpet, neo soul keyboards, and singer-songwriter guitar, he performs frequently in Hartford, New Haven, & New York. His music for film has been a part of festivals in Berlin, Cardiff, Los Angeles, and more.



### AVERY

**Avery** is a percussionist out of Norwalk, Connecticut. He finds solace in rhythm by exploring the spaces in between. Learning to convey emotion through drums has been his prime focus.



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## **MEET WWII VETERAN JOHN “STEW” LAHEY**

### **VETERAN SPEAKER**

“First of all, I’m not a hero. The heroes are the ones who didn’t come back.” This is how John Stewart “Stew” Lahey introduces himself. As a World War II veteran, he saw and experienced the many effects of war. He now lives in Bridgeport, CT as a loving father and husband who cares for family most of all.

Stew enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1944, he was just 18 years old. During WWII, he was transported around the Pacific to Guam, China, and Japan.

Stew is now 97 years old. As someone who always cares deeply about the safety and wellbeing of his family, he is still recovering from PTSD-induced anxiety and depression. He found a safety net in the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center.

***“[CVLC] has been super to me—above and beyond. I’m so thankful for the fact that you guys are there.”***

*Read CVLC’s full profile on Stew at [ctveteranslegal.org/stew](https://ctveteranslegal.org/stew).*

World War II Veteran John Stewart “Stew” Lahey. Photo by David Apuzzo.



### **CVLC’S 2022-23 IMPACT REPORT IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD**

Visit [CTVeteransLegal.org/OurImpact](https://CTVeteransLegal.org/OurImpact) to download your copy of our 2022-23 impact report and learn more about how we change veterans’ lives.

Intern Hillary Browning. Photo by David Apuzzo.

**THANK YOU** for showing your support for veterans by joining us at the **14th Annual Saluting Service**. All money raised directly benefits the work of Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, as we work towards a future where all military veterans in Connecticut can live with dignity.

## **DONATE NOW**

Your gift today will save lives. Use the QR code or see one of our staff.



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