



Veneratio Diligentia Vires

SERV
The Inspiring, Untold Stories
of America's First Responder

The Mighty Moms and
Wounded Warriors of Walter Reed

**UNBREAKABLE
BONDS**

★ DAVA GUERIN

An IACSP Q&A

With Dava Guerin

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Dava Guerin is an author, freelance writer and a communications consultant. She is also a wounded warrior and military veterans' advocate. Her books include political and business memoirs; non-fiction works focusing on wounded warriors, veterans and their caregivers. Her books offer forewords written by the late President George H. W. Bush and Former First Lady Barbara Bush, as well as actor and philanthropist Gary Sinise and Fox's National Security Correspondent, Jennifer Griffin.

Dava Guerin was president of Guerin Public Relations, Inc., a full-service communications firm, for more than twenty years located in Philadelphia.

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In her public relations firm, Dava Guerin has worked with numerous U.S. Presidents, including President George H. W. Bush, and managed visits for Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush as well as world leaders, U.S. politicians and entertainers. She has also created and managed public relations and crisis communications programs for Fortune 100 companies and government agencies.

Guerin's books include: "Rebuilding Sergeant Peck: How I Put Body and Soul Back Together After Afghanistan" (Skyhorse Publishing 2019); "The Eagle on My Arm" (University Press of Kentucky (2020); "Vets and Pets: Wounded Warriors and the Animals That Help Them Heal" (Skyhorse 2106); "Unbreakable Bonds: The Mighty Moms and Wounded Warriors of Walter Reed" (Skyhorse 2014); "Keep Chopping Wood" (Westbow Press 2016); and "Presidents, Kings and Convicts: My Journey from the Tennessee Governor's Residence to the Halls of Congress" (Archway, Simon & Schuster 2016.)

Dava Guerin is the co-author, along with Mike Hardwick and Sam Royer, of "Called To Serve: The Inspiring, Untold Stories of America's First Responders."

Dava Guerin was interviewed by Paul Davis.

IACSP: Why did you write "Called To Serve"?

Guerin: I and my co-authors, knowing so many law enforcement people especially, thought "Called To Serve" would be a way, along with my books on wounded warriors and veterans, of understanding what these people go through. Why do they want to do these jobs and why they chose to serve, and describe what their lives are truly like, and how they grew up. To really get into their hearts and souls.

IACSP: here is that saying that when something bad happens people run from it, but cops, fire fighters and other first responders run towards it. Why do you think they should be celebrated?

Guerin: Why do they choose to go to work every



They don't need a lot of outward attention because they dedicate their lives to helping others and they don't ask for anything in return. First responders are people who don't really get the accolades they should, yet what would we do if we fell or had an accident, called 911, and no one came? It is disheartening for them to put on a uniform, and some people try to kill them, and they spit on them, and degrade them.

day, knowing they might not make it home that night, or contract a disease or get burned in a fire? They don't ask for any attention, and they don't make much money. They don't need a lot of outward attention because they dedicate their lives to helping others and they don't ask for anything in return. First responders are people who don't really get the accolades they should, yet what would we do if we fell or had an accident, called 911, and no one came? It is disheartening for them to put on a uniform, and some people try to kill them, and they spit on them, and degrade them. .

IACSP: How did you and your co-authors select the people to profile in the book? I believe there are 16 people profiled.

Guerin: Yes, 16. Essentially, there were a couple of people I knew, and I researched it to see who won fire fighters awards and so on. I talked to them first and I found they were super special. Amy Royer, an EMS, as you know from the book, is my co-author Sam Royer's sister, and she, Sam and myself found all of the people we write about in the book. I could have written 20 more stories easily.

IACSP: You had two co-authors for "Called To Serve." Can you tell us who they are and how did you come to collaborate with them?

Guerin: Mike Hardwick is a CEO of a company he owns in Nashville, and I wrote his autobiography with him years ago. He has an employee, Sam Royer, who had an idea for a book about police officers. Mike called me up and asked me if I would be interested in writing about police officers with him. To make it a little more interesting, I suggested that we add fire fighters and EMS people. Then you have a really rich group of people.

Everyone agreed and that's how it happened. That's how the three of us came together.

IACSP: Jennifer Griffin, the very talented and knowledgeable Fox News national security correspondent, wrote your forward. How did she come to write the forward for you?

Guerin: All roads lead back to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Kevin Ferris and I wrote "Unbreak-



able Bonds: The Mighty Moms and Wounded Warriors of Walter Reed.” I was the communications director for the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, and I

decided to volunteer at Walter Reed. I went on Valentine’s Day with all these prizes that I brought, and I went into this one kid’s room who had been blown up months before, Mark Sizzler. I went in and his dad was there. His dad asked if I could come back. So, I was going back every week to see Mark and I met his mom, and I met all the other moms. Jennifer is a huge supporter of wounded warriors. She volunteered at Walter Reed, and I met her there and we became friends. She is tremendous. She emailed me one day and asked if I wanted to do a story about John Beck, a soldier who lost both his arms and legs, and I said yes. So I wrote “Building Sergeant Beck,” with Terry Bivins. Jennifer supports everything that has to do with veterans and wounded warriors.

IACSP: Jennifer Griffin is a fine journalist, and it’s good to know she also volunteers to help military vets. When people criticize Fox News, they don’t separate the opinion shows from the news coverage. I think Fox’s news coverage, with reporters like Jennifer Griffin, is basically fair.

You’ve written about Barbara Bush, the former First Lady. Can you tell us about your involvement with her and former President Bush?

Guerin: There is a nonprofit organization called the Children’s Literacy Initiative and they had an idea to have a radio show with Barbara Bush reading children’s stories along with other celebrities. ABC Radio loved the idea, and they pitched it to the White House. She loved it. I was volunteering for the Children’s Literacy Initiative, and I became the communications person for Mrs. Bush’s “Story Time” project. She was so funny and gracious. I got to spend so much personal time with her and her family and staff, and I got to know them very well. I loved her and President Bush. President Bush wrote this beautiful forward to “Unbreakable Bonds.” I was asked to bring all of the wounded warriors and their mothers to the Bush’s home, and we launched the book there. Two years later, Barbara Bush wrote the forward for “Vets



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and Pets: Wounded Warriors and Their Animals That Help Them Heal,” which I wrote with Kevin Ferris. We brought the veterans and their animals to the Bush home, and an owl pooped on President Bush’s pants. A big one. Mrs., Bush said, “Oh, please. Don’t worry about it, he has plenty of pants.” It was hysterical.

IACSP: You’ve written about support animals for wounded warriors. Can you tell us about that.

Guerin: After we did “Unbreakable Bonds,” I was talking to one of our editors at Skyhorse publishing, and I suggested that we do something about service dogs. The editor came back and said why don’t you include other support animals and broaden it out. So Kevin Ferris and I wrote about dogs, a potbellied pig, birds of prey, cats, horses, and other animals. These animals give so much comfort to wounded warriors.

IACSP: Thank you for speaking to us and thank you for supporting wounded warriors and veterans.

About the Interviewer:

Paul Davis, a Navy veteran who served on an aircraft carrier during the Vietnam War, is a long-time contributor to the Journal and writes the IACSP Threatcon column.



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