



Greetings Sisters and Brothers of the great Department of Maryland VFW Auxiliary,

I am completely honored and beyond excited to have been elected as your Department President for the 2023 - 2024 year. I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you this coming year. YOU, the members, are the ones who will make this year a successful one - each and every one of you matters! I am also looking forward to continuing to work with Commander Holland to encourage and support the VFW in any way the Auxiliary can.

Our incoming National President Carla Martinez's Theme is Be Humble and Kind. Although we may not always agree on everything, we have to "Band Together for our Veterans" which is on her personal pin. Our veteran(s) are the reasons we were able to join this wonderful organization. So always remember YOUR WHY. I am looking forward to working with you all as a TEAM. Teamwork makes the Dream Work!

My theme this year is Be a Veteran's P.A.L. Many of you are wondering what that stands for. Well, when I was thinking about my theme, I was thinking about all of the veterans in my family and community, as well as, what I had observed and thought about what changes I could make during this year to affect a positive change for our Veterans.

There are three things that P.A.L. stands for:

1. Be a Veteran's P.A.L. - **Be a Veteran's Person Always Loving:** Our veterans made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom so when they return home we need to honor and love them for all they have done for each of us.
2. Be a Veteran's P.A.L. - **Be a Veteran's Person Always Listening:** Our veterans may not always use their words to communicate. We need to listen to not only their spoken words but also their unspoken words.
3. Be a Veteran's P.A.L. - **Be a Veteran's Person Always Legislating:** Our report information should be passed down monthly to our Post Commanders. That information is then reported on the VFW dashboard. Our Department Chairman also report necessary information on their report forms directly to their National Ambassadors, this information is compiled and used on the National VFW Auxiliary's Fact Sheet. It is these hours and dollars spent on our Veterans, their families, and our communities that help to influence Congress to allow more funding of the VA programs and to justify the continued IRS tax-free status.

My special project is U.S. Kennels Inc. The reason I chose this as my special project is because of my father, Vance Jones, a World War II Veteran. As a child, I never understood why we could not go to events where there were fireworks. The sounds of the fireworks triggered his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. We had two dogs, one named Max and one named Missy. Whenever Max and Missy, HIS little dogs, were near, they always seemed to make him happier, calmer and not so on edge. They were his unofficial service dogs. Max and Missy really came to his aid once he became an amputee due to a service-related injury. They made him feel better and he made them feel better by giving them more treats than they ever needed.

The U.S. Kennels motto is "Saving Veterans One Paw At A Time." They focus on partnering rescue dogs with disabled veterans. The team (Dog, Veteran and Veteran Trainer) work together for at least a year. The veteran and the dog receive training and supplies free of charge for the duration of the program. I hope that you will find this non-profit organization as a good resource to promote in your own VFW Posts and communities.

I am looking forward to having a fun, exciting and amazing year with all of you. It has been a struggle to get back to some sense of normalcy since the Covid-19 pandemic but I am excited to be able to travel and visit auxiliaries and attend events, so please extend me an invitation to your events. If I am able, I would like to be there to observe the wonderful things that you all are doing across the state. Becoming your Department President is a huge responsibility and one that I do not take lightly. I will do my very best to always represent the Department in a positive light and manner.

Respectfully,

VaNette Jones

Department of Maryland

VFW Auxiliary Department President

