



The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

V.A. Secretary Robert McDonald and V.A. Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson earn the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs highest honor.

December 19, 2016

Alexandria, VA - The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) announced the selection of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald and Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson as co-recipients of NASDVA's 2017 "Advocate of the Year Award". The award, established in 1997, will be presented to McDonald and Gibson at NASDVA's Mid-Winter Conference in February 2017 and will recognize their significant work and accomplishment on behalf of America's Veterans during calendar year 2016.

NASDVA's "Advocate of the Year Award" was established specifically to recognize, each year, an individual of National stature who has made a significant and sustained impact on improving care and service to America's Veterans. 2017 will be only the third time in the award's history that two individuals will be recognized. It is the highest honor NASDVA can bestow. Past recipients include Senators, Congressmen, Governors and private citizens; people like G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, sponsor of the Montgomery G.I. Bill, General Wilma Vaught, champion for the Women in Military Service Memorial, Senator Jim Webb, sponsor of the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill and other prominent Veterans' champions and advocates.

"Bob McDonald and Sloan Gibson have overseen and implemented the largest and most effective transformation in VA that any of us can remember," said Randy Reeves, President of NASDVA. **"The ongoing (positive) reverse in culture they have brought to VA and the foundation they have laid for continued improvement of care and service by the Department can, without doubt, pay dividends for America's Veterans for many years to come. I have seen their work first hand and I will always be impressed by their ability to build relationships and create "force multipliers" for our Veterans that reach far beyond the VA itself. The partnership they have built between States and the VA is a perfect example of that."**

"Bob McDonald and Sloan Gibson always put the needs of Veterans first," said Les Beavers, Executive Director of NASDVA. **"They have done what we expect of our military men and women. When things have gotten tough, they have run to the fight. They have stood strong and they have done the harder right instead of the easier wrong - for our Veterans."**

Media inquiries and comments may be addressed directly to:

Randy Reeves

President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs

Phone: **601-576-4857** or email: reeves@vab.ms.gov

The National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) is comprised of the State Directors and in some cases, Commissioners of Veterans Affairs in each state of the U.S. as well as the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Although each state is unique, with its own traditions, programs, and resources, we are united by our common goal to make a difference in the lives of our Veterans. NASDVA, through its Member States, Territories and the District of Columbia, serves and represents all of the nearly 22 million Veterans in the United States.

[NASDVA, Inc., 107 S. West Street, #570, Alexandria, VA 22314](http://www.nasdva.org)