

Chair



The Honorable Robert A. McDonald '75

The Senate unanimously confirmed Robert A. McDonald as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on July 29, 2014. Secretary McDonald led the Department in its ambitious transformational journey to be the top customer-service agency in the federal government. That undertaking began with reinforcing the importance of VA's inspiring mission to care for those "who shall have borne the battle," their families, and survivors, re-emphasizing VA's commitment to its values.

Over the course of Secretary McDonald's tenure, VA expanded veteran access by focusing on staffing, space, productivity, and VA Community Care. VA continued driving down the disability claims backlog while positioning the Department for sweeping appeals reform. The VA has made substantial progress in eliminating veteran homelessness. The Harvard Business School's November 2016 study of the transformation judged that the VA made "impressive progress."

Secretary McDonald spent 33 years with the Procter & Gamble Company, retiring as Chairman, President & CEO in 2013. During his tenure the corporation was widely recognized for its leadership development. In 2012, *Chief Executive* magazine named P&G the best company for developing leaders. The Hay Group, a global management consulting firm, consistently cited P&G in its top-tier of the Best Companies for Leadership Study. Secretary McDonald significantly recalibrated P&G's product portfolio, expanded its marketing footprint, added nearly one billion people to its global customer base, and grew its organic sales by an average of three percent annually. P&G's stock price rose from \$51.10 the day he became CEO to \$81.64 on the day his last quarterly results were announced—a 60-percent increase.

A Distinguished Graduate of USMA, Secretary McDonald graduated in the top two percent of his class, recognized by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing, and Commerce for the "most distinguished academic record and significant role in cadet activities." He served as Brigade Adjutant. He later earned an MBA from the University of Utah in 1978, where he is a Distinguished Alumnus. Bob and Diane, members of the Sylvanus Thayer Society of Lifetime Giving, donated the statue of Ulysses S. Grant to West Point and established the McDonald Conference for Leaders of Character.

Secretary McDonald served primarily with the 82nd Airborne Division. He completed Jungle, Arctic, and Desert Warfare training and earned the Ranger Tab, the Expert Infantryman Badge, and the Senior Parachutist Badge. Upon leaving the military, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. From 2020 to 2021, he served as the April and Jay Graham Fellow for the George W. Bush Presidential Center. In 2021, he received the President's Award for Lifetime Achievement from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and in 2024 he was elected Chairman of the Board of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. Bob and Diane are the parents of two children and proud grandparents of six grandchildren.