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**AVVA Life Member 900643**

I am running for Region 5 Director as the proud son of a Vietnam Veteran and proud lifetime member of AVVA. My day job is benefits coordinator for City of Lawrence, with a lifetime of volunteering.

It all started in 1987 while visiting my grandparents in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Someone told my dad we were going to get ice cream at Carvel's ice cream parlor. Little did he know, they had a stop at The Moving Wall planned in nearby Clarks Summit. None of us knew that simple stop for ice cream would have a formative impact on our trajectories when we returned home to Indiana. In 1989, my parents took me to see a bust of Sammy L. Davis, CMH be dedicated at Mooresville High School. That experience, and meeting Sammy, becoming lifelong friends with him has remained one of my most enduring memories.

In 1994, at the ripe age of 14, I wrote to Governor's, Senator's and even a few others who would read my letter to collect all 50 State flags and District of Columbia to be displayed at The Moving Wall when it is hosted by VVA Chapter 295. It wasn't long after I started volunteering in the locator tent, then helping people find names of loved ones and friends engraved on the Memorial. In the 1990's and early 2000's, there was an all-veteran's reunion known as Firebase Indy. I was a speaker at several programs held at The Wall honoring Gold Star Families in addition to a few Opening Ceremonies over the 12 times it has been hosted.

After graduating from Wabash College, I remained active with the AVVA. While at Wabash, I wrote a term paper examining the plight of America's Last POW: Charles E. Shelton. That research brought on a different perspective and reality of what our POW-MIA families experience.

There have been several things accomplished: shopping at Christmas for a needy veteran through the Hoosier Veterans and Families (HVAF), writing a grant application for a veteran to apply for a one time grant to help get back on even ground, and coordinating various activities. I also volunteer with VVA 295 and Vietnam Veterans for Veterans at their merchandise table each fall in Kokomo, Indiana for a week, at the annual All Veterans Reunion held there.

As someone who was born Hard of Hearing, we'll never know the precise reason for my severe bilateral hearing loss. Because of this, Agent Orange advocacy and research in the next generation, as well as the grandkids of Vietnam vets, is very important to me.

I have served as AVVA Indiana State Council Vice President and have been President since 2015. These things, I strongly believe, intertwined with my life's experience as "the next generation" will bring an innovative approach to AVVA. It is possible to merge something you love with what is important to you. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, going to concerts or a Broadway show, reading a good biography or history book, innovative road trips and spending time with loyal, and spoiled, cats and dogs.

