

For Immediate Release

The Alexandria Library Foundation Hosts First Annual Author Event and Reception to Raise Needed Library Funds

New Book Highlights Military Wives Who Rallied National Support for Our Missing Men during Vietnam War

Alexandria, Va. (August 16, 2023) – The Alexandria Library Foundation announces its first Annual Author Event and Reception 6:00-8:30 p.m. (presentation to start at 7:30 p.m.), on September 21st, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street in Alexandria. **Senator Mark Warner** will serve as the Honorary Chair and **Councilman John Taylor Chapman** will emcee the event.

Local author **Taylor Baldwin Kiland**, and her co-author, **Judy Silverstein Gray**, have published a new book, *Unwavering: The Wives Who Fought to Ensure No Man is Left Behind* (Knox Press, 2023) It tells the story of military wives who waged an unprecedented home-front battle, speaking out after years of waiting patiently. This was unusual at a time when most women were denied credit or housing without a male to co-sign. Pushing past cultural, societal, and diplomatic barriers, the wives moved from the sidelines to the frontlines of advocacy, convincing elected officials and world leaders to make the fate of America's missing and imprisoned men a national priority and central to the Paris peace talks.

"Not only does this new book mark an important time in U.S. history," says Foundation Board President Trudi Bellardo Hahn, "it also illustrates the power of the written and spoken word." The event will raise funds for needed library materials and programs.

Kiland is a former naval officer and Gray is a retired Coast Guard chief petty officer. The authors will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and the homecoming of our POWs from Southeast Asia.

Kiland will lead a panel discussion including military wives who rallied national attention for their missing and captive husbands during the Vietnam War. Panelists include co-author **Judy Silverstein Gray**; **Andrea Rander** of Bethesda, wife of Army Sgt. Don Rander, an intelligence specialist captured during the 1968 Tet Offensive; **Emilee Reynolds**, also of Bethesda, whose then fiancé, Air Force Capt. Jon Reynolds, was shot down and taken prisoner three weeks before their wedding; and the **Hon. Everett Alvarez, Jr.**, also of Bethesda, was captured during the Tonkin Gulf Incident in 1964. He was held captive for eight and a half years, enduring one of the longest periods of captivity in U.S. military history. He later served as a political appointee for Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

Learn more about the book and reserve your ticket: <https://alexlibraryva.org/library-foundation>

The Alexandria Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that strengthens our community through advocacy and the supplemental funding of the Alexandria Library System. The Foundation's work results in accessible programming, resources, services, and spaces. The Alexandria Library, through its six branches, served 770,000 visitors and web users in 2022.