



## 2024 THRIVING AS LEADERS Award Selections

### ***Alumni Outstanding Achievement - Professional Athlete Selectee:***

#### **LT Joseph Cardona '15, USNR**

Long snapper for the New England Patriots, LT Joe Cardona '15 is the recipient of the 2023 Salute to Service Award presented by USAA, recognizing exceptional efforts by members of the NFL family to honor and support the military community. LT Cardona balances his service work in support of military and veterans' programs with professional football and Naval reserve duty as a department head of Maritime Security Squadron 8, headquartered in Newport, RI, serving the logistical needs of 500 sailors across the eastern seaboard. He served previously as a staff officer at the Naval Academy Preparatory School, and overseas in US Forces Korea.



LT Cardona recently joined the board of the Military Family Advisory Network, a nonprofit organization that provides vital support to military families facing hardships. Additionally, he has partnered with the New England Center and Home for Veterans, an organization that serves our nation's most at risk veterans, providing shelter, medical care, occupational services and more. In 2018, LT Cardona was honored with the Patriot's Ron Burton Community Service Award, an accolade given to honor his work in the community.



***Alumni Outstanding Achievement - Amateur Athlete Selectee:***

**Col Henry J. "Hank" Donigan '77,  
USMC (Ret.)**

Col Henry J. "Hank" Donigan '77, USMC (Ret.) served for 30 years in uniform. Graduating from USNA in 1977, Col Donigan commanded an infantry unit in the Grenada operation, led peacekeeping operations in Lebanon, and humanitarian relief efforts in the former Yugoslavia. He served in the Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom, earning four Bronze Stars, one with Combat "V", and two Legions of Merit. Upon retirement, he continued to support the Marine Corps as a defense contractor and educator, helping to shape future leaders through the Marine Corps Command and Staff College Blended Seminar Program.



A lifelong advocate for health and fitness, and despite having a 100% disability rating from the Veterans Administration, Col Donigan has completed 477 marathons and ultra-marathons, including running annually in the Marine Corps Marathon since 2014 to honor his fallen classmates. He completed the Hawaii Ironman World Triathlon Championship in February 1982. Col Donigan was the #1 individual fundraiser for the Semper Fi & America's Fund in 2023, raising \$92K, and has completed 50 marathons each year since 2020.



***Alumni Outstanding Achievement – Professional (Non-Athletic) Selectee:***

**Matthew Wallace ‘84**

Matthew Wallace is the Director for Planetary Sciences at JPL. He oversees formulation, development, and operations of NASA missions to the Outer Planets, Mars, Venus, asteroids, and the Moon. Prior to becoming director, Wallace held various project leadership roles, most recently managing the Psyche asteroid mission and as Deputy Project Manager and Project Manager for the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover mission. He initiated the concept work for Perseverance in 2012 and led the development and implementation team for nearly a decade



through spacecraft launch and its successful landing at Jezero Crater on Mars in February 2021. Wallace worked on all five NASA Mars rovers, beginning as a power systems engineer on the Mars Pathfinder Sojourner vehicle. He led the assembly and test team for the twin Spirit and Opportunity missions which landed in 2004, and held the Flight System Manager on the 2012 Curiosity mission. He has worked on other planetary missions, and as a program manager for Earth-observing satellites in the aerospace industry.

Wallace graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering, and served in the fast attack submarine fleet. He holds a Masters degree in Electrical Engineering from Caltech.



### ***Volunteer Leadership and Service Selectee:***

#### **Mawuli Mel Davis '91**

For 32 years, Mawuli Davis '91 has volunteered with over 20 different non-profits while co-founding four. As a 22-year-old Ensign, Davis co-founded his first non-profit, the National African American Club, onboard the USS Forrestal (AVT-59). He was the Navy's recipient of the NAACP's Renown Service Award presented by the Secretary of the Navy and was awarded the Navy's Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. After medical discharge as a Supply Corps officer, Davis developed youth empowerment programming, established a GED and



Adult Literacy site, volunteered in prisons, organized youth basketball programs, created an African American history book collection, led a gym shoe drive for children in Africa, mentored children whose parents are incarcerated, helped raise over \$800,000 to support educational opportunities for students, and volunteered thousands of hours as a lawyer in providing pro bono legal representation.

His service as an attorney and community organizer earned recognition from over 30 different organizations as a noteworthy humanitarian; these honors include the Georgia State University College of Law's highest award for Public Service and Honorary Doctorate in Human Letters from the Interdenominational Theological Center.