

May 26, 2015

## Endowment Fund announces convention awards created to recognize SAL support

Contributions to commander's project must be received no later than July 1

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**INDIANAPOLIS** - The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation has introduced two new Sons of The American Legion (SAL) awards, both named for prominent Legionnaires who were instrumental to the fund's birth and long-term success. The Harry W. Colmery Legacy Award will honor the detachment with the highest donation to the Endowment Fund for the membership year; the James A. Drain Founder's Award will honor the detachment with the highest per-capita donation. The awards will be given annually, presented for the first time at the upcoming SAL National Convention in Baltimore.

Considered the principal architect of the G.I. Bill, Mr. Colmery spent five months in seclusion drafting the text for the historical document. He served for 38 years as president of the Endowment Fund Corporation and was the first past national commander awarded The American Legion Distinguished Service Medal.

Mr. Drain, for whom the Founder's Award is named, raised the initial \$700,000 to create the Endowment Fund during his term as national commander. In addition to holding that position in 1924 when The American Legion was just five years old, Mr. Drain served simultaneously as treasurer and judge advocate of the fledgling organization during the 1934-35 membership year. His administrative guidance was instrumental in developing the Legion into the organization that we know today.

The Endowment Fund was established in 1925 when members of The American Legion raised \$5 million to create a reserve that would support returning veterans and their families for years to come. Through 90 years of careful management and oversight, the Endowment Fund has grown to over \$10 million and granted well over the original \$5 million. The sole purpose of the Endowment Fund was and continues to be the funding of two programs: one that assists veterans with minor children through crisis situations – what we now refer to as the Temporary Financial Assistance program. The other, called the Department Service Officer program, trains and educates service officers on how to assist veterans with their claims against the Veterans Administration.

The Sons of The American Legion has existed to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans since 1932. Membership includes males of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and are eligible for American Legion

membership. Michael Moss, the SAL National Commander, made the Endowment Fund one of his fundraising projects for 2014-2015.

Contributions to the Endowment Fund Corporation for this program year must be received by National Headquarters no later than July 1; funds received after that date will be counted towards the 2015-16 program totals. Donations may be made either through The American Legion website at [www.legion.org/donate/endowmentfund](http://www.legion.org/donate/endowmentfund) or by mail at The American Legion Endowment Fund, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

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