

## You've heard me say...

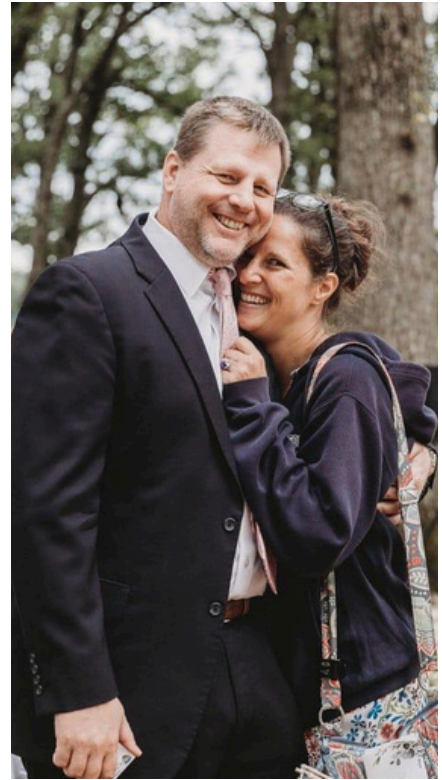
...while we can never do enough for our nation's defenders, we can always do a little more. At the Gary Sinise Foundation, we're forever looking for new ways to pass your generous support on to our heroes and their families.



When we find new ways to serve and honor our defenders, additional ways we can meet their needs, we do it. And with your ongoing support, we're doing more and more every day.

Below are a few stories of how we made a difference in the lives of those we serve. I am forever grateful you have joined me.

Your pal,



COMFORTING THE ONES LEFT BEHIND

## **"I Was Lost Without My Best Friend. That Retreat Gave Me Hope."**

When Nicole was 22 years old, she married her high school sweetheart, Mike. He had just graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy and together they embarked on a journey our military families know so well.

Hand-in-hand and heart-to-heart, Nicole and Mike held each other up throughout Mike's multiple deployments, always praying for his safe return. So, when Mike finally retired after 23 years of honorable service, the couple was excited for all the years and new adventures they would have together.

But then tragedy struck. In Nicole's own words:

I was widowed in 2022 at the age of 49 when my husband of 27 years died very unexpectedly from what turned out to be toxic burn pit exposure. Mike had been an Air Force Pilot for 23 years and had served in the Middle East. When Mike died, our six children were ages 12 to 22.

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I was lost without my best friend. Another military widow encouraged me to apply for a grant from the Gary Sinise Foundation to attend a Widows of Heroes retreat. There at the retreat, we were able to begin the process of healing, to find community with women who were successfully walking this journey.

I cannot thank you enough because that retreat gave me hope. Hope that I would survive. Hope that I could still be a really good mom. Hope that we could all find joy again and that we could successfully navigate life even without Mike.

Because of the hope there, and the relationships in the community, I was able to meet a woman who was also widowed who lives just 30 miles from me. This fall, we are launching a locals group in Bozeman, Montana.

But none of that could have been made possible without the grant from Gary Sinise for me to be able to attend. I also have to say, it was really special to be able to tour the Foundation. Mike actually proposed to me the night after we saw Forrester Gump.

So, Gary, thank you very much.





PROVIDING ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT TO OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

## Your Support Saved Lives

The alarm sounded at 11:30 PM.

Within moments, firefighters from Nolensville Fire & Rescue were racing to save a home that had been struck by lightning. Each of them wore heavy turnout gear, protective clothing made of many layers of fire resistant material to protect these heroes from the blazing inferno.

That turnout gear was donated thanks to your support.

The family made it out to safety, but four firefighters were injured that night. We are relieved to share that all four are recovering at home.

In the wake of the fire, Captain Sam Killingsworth reached out to share his gratitude with all of you.

*I just wanted to reach out and personally thank you and the Gary Sinise Foundation.*

*Last Tuesday, my guys were burned in the fire caused by lightning in Nolensville. After seeing their injuries and the gear, I am confident in saying that had they not had the new gear provided by the Gary Sinise Foundation they would have been injured much worse. I am so thankful and so relieved that my guys are okay. Your contributions are definitely working to protect our firefighters in the Middle Tennessee Area.*

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#### DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### **GSF's Longest Recurring Donor**

David Lester has a special distinction at the Gary Sinise Foundation – he's our longest serving monthly donor. Since 2012, David has faithfully supported our mission each month so we can continue our work to restore independence and hope to our nation's heroes.

David has a rich history of service to our country, which started when he was a teenager. In 1957, he joined the Coast Guard Reserve when he was just a junior in high school. He went on active duty the following year in Wilmington, NC. He participated in ocean patrols, law enforcement, and search & rescue operations. Later, he became a firefighter in Maryland, then joined the Maryland State Police. He moved to Arizona and joined the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office where he served for 28 years. He retired in 2006.

When asked why he supports the Gary Sinise Foundation, David says:

*I saw what Gary was doing for the military, police and fire disabled personnel and this inspired me to become a donor. The Gary Sinise Foundation builds homes that are customized to the needs of severely disabled veterans, police and fire department members. The Foundation also helps those not so severely injured with medical equipment such as powered wheelchairs.*

Today, David enjoys rural living and what he calls the country cowboy way of life. He's RV'd in all 48 of the contiguous states and counts himself as a grateful American.

*We enjoy a freedom that no other nation in the world has. Gary is doing a wonderful job and he truly is a great patriotic American. God bless him for all he does.*





#### LEAVING A LEGACY OF GRATITUDE

### **Welcoming Our Legacy Society Family To Nashville**

We were honored to welcome more than 40 members of the GSF Legacy Society to Nashville for an unforgettable weekend. Legacy Society members are supporters who have taken the important, personal step of including the Gary Sinise Foundation in their bequest and long-range estate plans.

These participants travelled to our headquarters to be treated with a weekend full of inspiring events. On Friday, members were invited for an exclusive tour of the Foundation. They learned about the origins of all our programs and saw Gary's collection of keepsakes and memorabilia in our Education & Outreach Center.

After meeting the team, they then joined us on an outreach mission to serve meals of gratitude to more than fifty first responders at firehouses around the community.

On Saturday morning, Gary hosted a brunch with a musical performance by Scotty Hasting, a country music artist and Purple Heart recipient. And as a finale to the weekend, our Legacy Society members enjoyed a 30th anniversary screening of Forrest Gump at the historic Franklin Theater.

The weekend was fantastic, and we especially enjoyed serving heroes at the local fire station. They were so grateful. We even saw some of them at the “Forrest Gump” showing. It was like seeing an old friend there. Gary, we thank you for continuing your mission. Please know that you will always have our support. May God bless you and your endeavors. - Diane and Jim S

—To learn more about becoming part of our Legacy Society, or to let us know you’ve already included the Foundation in your estate plans, call 615-575-3500 or email us at [donor@garysinisefoundation.org](mailto:donor@garysinisefoundation.org).







IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

## Quadruple Amputee Travis Mills Tells All

Join us in welcoming US Army veteran and quadruple amputee Travis Mills to the Gary Sinise Foundation podcast. Travis Mills is a long time friend of Gary Sinise is the epitome of resilience who is one of five surviving service members to have lost all four limbs.

[Listen now](#) or stream on your favorite podcast apps.

Remind our heroes that we never forget them.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

