



Freedom Flyer

Celebrate Freedom Foundation

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Inside this Edition

- Holiday Greetings pg. 1
- Chairman's Corner pg. 2-4
- Presidents Press pg. 5
- Tributes to Outgoing Chairman/CEO Pg. 6&7
- STEM Education Team Report and Schedule pg. 8
- Sponsors pg. 9
- CFF Contact Information pg. 10

Merry
Christmas
&
Happy
New Year





“A Time to Say Goodbye”

Outgoing Chairman & CEO John Lenti

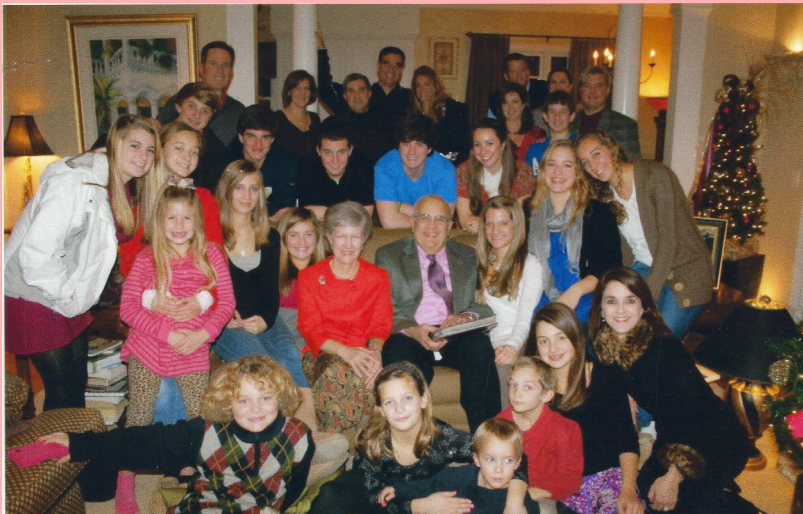


“Thank you for your service”. If you are one of the 1% who served in our military, you’re familiar with the words. On a humid and hot day in July ,1956, I stood, with my to be classmates, on the Plain at West Point and took the oath of allegiance “to defend the nation from all enemies, foreign and domestic”. That hot and humid day so many years ago would change my life forever.

The first born son of immigrants who had little education but knew that America was the golden door and the key to that door was education. This became their goal in life, to make sure my sister and I had the education we needed to succeed . Serving as a soldier and willing to defend the nation that gave me and my family the life we have had, was a privilege and my service was but a down payment on what me and my family owes America.

CFF was a continuation of that privilege to serve with men and women who understood the debt owed to the nation. It was my honor to have had the opportunity to be part of a program that help to prepare the next generation of patriots to serve the nation. As I will retire after over 20 years with CFF, It is my sincere hope that the CFF will continued to accomplish this vital mission. It was always a privilege to serve.

“Veterans Inspiring the Next Generation”



50th Wedding Anniversary with 19 Grandchildren, 2 sons and 3 daughters.



“A Time to Say Goodbye” cont.

John Lenti



Longtime friend and CFF Board member, Joe Rich



**West Point Graduation Hop,
1960**



**Being awarded the Bronze Star with
Valor, Viet Nam 1968**



**Briefing for Special Forces relief,
Viet Nam 1967**



Having a deep discussion with CFF's Katie Free



Special Forces Airborne jump, Viet Nam 1968



“A Time to Say Goodbye” cont.

John Lenti



Being awarded the Bronze Star with Valor, Viet Nam 1968



Being reassured by CFF President Jack Lovelady, “it’s all under control”



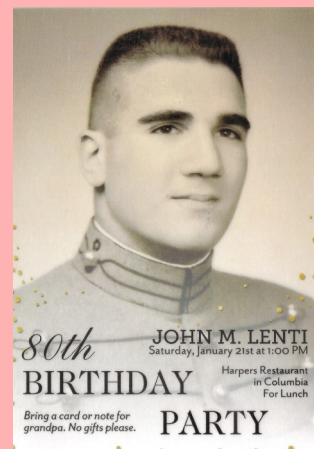
A visit from Miss South Carolina, Morgan Nichols (seated in “Maggie”) 2020



Good friend and former CFF Board member, Kevin Shwedo



CFF at the Rotary meeting Nov 7, 2005





President's Press

Jack Lovelady

How it Began

Saluting our Retiring Chairman

Our paths first crossed while Major General John Lenti and I were both serving in the U.S. Army during Operation Desert Storm in 1990. We did not know at that time our paths would again cross, a decade later with the creation and building of the Celebrate Freedom Foundation. Established in 1999 by three friends, General Latham, Dr. Bruce Rippeteau, and myself, we collectively sought out strong leadership on our Board of Directors. By 1999, both General Lenti and I had retired from the Army. General Lenti, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, was now teaching a Leadership course at the Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina and was serving as the Director of the South Carolina Small Business Development Center.

An Invitation was extended to General Lenti, to join the Foundations Board. During these early years of growth, he brought to the Board essential skills required for success. John guided the Foundation with development and implementation of a strategic plan which focused on a unique STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education Outreach Program, that utilized a wide variety of training aids and assets having been acquired by CFF. General Lenti always recognized that our staff and volunteers were our most valuable asset. Most of these individuals are military veterans and they serve as the subject matter experts who deliver the STEM Education Outreach Program to schools across the southeastern U.S. These CFF instructors are "Veterans Inspiring the Next Generation".

When the Foundations original Chairman, General Woody Randall, became ill and could no longer serve in that capacity, John was elected as the new Chairman. Under his leadership. The Foundations education and workforce development program gained both state and national recognition. He focused our programs on the Title 1 underserved schools and ensured that our staff included the special needs students at every school visit.

The majority of the Foundations staff and volunteers are military veterans, some of whom are suffering from PTSD, TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), and other effects of wartime service. General Lenti brought about a non-clinical approach which is federally recognized as being effective in helping the veterans to become productive members of society.

John, you have mentored and coached us for these many years. You have always been there for us. You and your contributions will never be forgotten. Thank you John for being our friend and leader.



CONGRATULATIONS TO RETIRING CELEBRATE FREEDOM FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN JOHN LENTI

--CFF Founding Corporate Secretary (1996/1999); CFF Emeritus Co-President (with Jack Lovelady) Bruce RippetEAU (Lincoln Nebraska and Cape Vincent, New York State)

You, John Lenti, Major General and former Viet Nam combat US Army Ranger, and esteemed professor of Business at the University of South Carolina, has, for the last 2 decades, well led the Celebrate Freedom Foundation as the second ever CEO. Continuing with President Jack Lovelady, you moved us beyond our formation's Air and Ground Shows of the 1996-2008 years, into the mainstream of military service organizations devoted to assisting the US Army with all manner of enterprises.

Bringing your business expertise, you John had such activities range from seizing on an existing CFF effort of creating recruitment excitement by the restoration (appearance and mechanical perfection by numerous veterans) and the careful flying of our 5 Congressionally awarded Cobra helicopters, for the benefit of aspiring High School graduates. Indeed, by you the Foundation became purposely oriented to job creation and workforce development *per se*, and was even officially visited by SC Governor Nimrata Nikki Haley (she, later, being the titanium US Representative to the United Nations) and numerous military leaders from Washington, DC.

I first met you, John, on the USC Campus, before CFF loomed, when the both of us arrived on time for a Deans and Directors Meeting, but at the wrong location. And your same coolness shown there and then obtained as I watched you transition the often-hard road from evolving a founding leadership team to a necessary and successful change in emphasis in our CFF's central purpose.

Of many memories and appreciations, I thank you, John, for this is my most memorable :

Around 2005 when you asked me to accompany you to a Columbia, SC Chamber of Commerce luncheon at which we presented our Foundation and its value to the City and State. We were directed to a random, or not, couple of luncheon table seats. And by chance, we both spotted that a business-suited young man next to me was wearing a wrist band honoring his 75th Ranger Regiment friend killed in action. John was appreciative of the Ranger's service as was I, but I was amazed to discover that the KIA friend (who, like a good American, had run to rescue a screaming woman at a car checkpoint, and it had been an explosive suicide trap) was a relative named Russell Rippetoe. Thank you, John, for that advocacy opportunity and that surprise, meaningful memory. Our time together with that special CFF-Columbia Chamber of Commerce experience of a Ranger *per se*, and my relative *per se*.

Thank you!!!



Tribute to John Lenti as not only our leader, but true and respected friend

Board Member Carl Horn

Colonel U.S. Army Retired

United States Military Academy, West Point

Class of 1976

Having known John for a little more than 8 years, as the Chairman of our great Celebrate Freedom Foundation, I have developed a clear understanding and appreciation for this patriot, total professional, and, most importantly, beloved family man.

His many decades of service to country beginning as a cadet at West Point, through his active-duty years most notably in Special Operations, distinguished tours in Vietnam, and his command of the State Guard, all culminated in his vision and leadership at the helm of CFF.

The debt of gratitude which we all owe John cannot and should not be overstated.

Upon his final retirement and for his sacrifices to our nation, his inspiration to those who truly know him, and his true friendship, I offer my humble and heartfelt thanks.

God Speed, John.



Carl Horn as an Instructor on a STEM Education Outreach Program visit with "Lena"

(2020 Pre Covid)

STEM Education Team Report

**Make Sure Schools in Your County Get the Support They Deserve,
So Your Students Can Receive a Visit They'll Never Forget.**

Celebrate Freedom Foundation's exciting STEM Education Outreach Program visits dozens of schools across the southeastern US every year with more than 10,0000 students participating annually.

CFF's STEM Education Outreach Program emphasizes the necessity of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in K–12 grades. It connects the classroom with real world jobs and career fields. The program's mission is to help build a workforce that can compete globally for jobs in the future and to ensure America's technological advantage in a global environment. STEM subjects provide skills and competencies greatly needed here in the southeast, across the nation, and globally.

How can you help the CFF STEM Education Outreach Program? We are always looking for volunteers to assist in these visits, and, if you have a school that you want us to visit, let us know. You can reach out to **Lori Wicker**, our Executive Vice President and Director of STEM Education, by email at [**stemed@cff-soar.org**](mailto:stemed@cff-soar.org) or a phone call at **(803) 882-8812**.

We are booking 28 schools for the 2022/2023 school year to be part of our Celebrate Freedom Foundation STEM Education Outreach School program.

The following School have already signed up for the new school year.

Sandhill Middle School Gaston, SC
White Knoll High School Lexington, SC
Pleasant Knoll Middle School Lexington, SC
Springfield Middle School Fort Mills, SC
Forrest Creek Middle School Fort Mills, SC
Dutch Fork High School Irmo, SC
McCracken Middle School Bluffton, SC
Silver Bluff High School Aiken SC
West Florence High School Florence, SC
Lugoff -Elgin High School Lugoff -Elgin, SC
Crest Wood High School Sumter, SC

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

The Celebrate Freedom Foundation would like to thank all of our sponsors who have given donations in order to ensure the education of STEM and to honor our military - past, present, and future.



To Contact the Celebrate Freedom Foundation:

Celebrate Freedom Foundation
2533 B Airport Blvd.
West Columbia, SC 29170

Phone: (803) 822-8812
Email: info@cff-soar.org
website: www.GoCFF.org

Educating the Public, Promoting Patriotism, and Honoring the Military - Past, Present, and Future



CFF - QR Code


Celebrate Freedom would like to give a special thanks to all of the volunteers who have given their time and effort to the renovation of the CFF Headquarters and to our Board of Directors for their continued pursuit of progress. Without the countless hours of help, CFF wouldn't be where we are today.
Thank you!



Any questions or suggestions about the newsletter, please contact Tom Robbins at the phone number above or by email - webmaster@cff-soar.org


Donation or Membership Mail-In Slip

If you would like to make a donation or become a member of CFF you can fill in your information below, cut it out and mail it to CFF at the address listed above or visit our website and use PayPal.



Mail-in Donation and/or Membership Slip

Please Print



Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____ Prior Service?: _____ Branch _____

Spouse Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Phone #: _____ Anniversary Date: _____

College Student: \$25.00 x _____ Annual: \$50.00 x _____ Lifetime: \$250.00 x _____ Sponsor Donation: \$ _____