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**MVA Announces Next Generation Board Uniquely Equipped to Address  
Minority Veteran Issues**  
*Eight Dynamic and Proven Leaders Represent Changing Face of Veteran Community*

WASHINGTON, DC (February 18, 2021) – Today, Minority Veterans of America (MVA), is incredibly proud to announce its newly formed Board of Directors. The eight-person Board brings unique and varied experience to the organization, as well as a steadfast commitment to meeting the needs of the millions of minority veterans who have historically been marginalized, underserved, and underrepresented.

MVA’s newest Board members are: **Uma Mishra-Newbery** (she/her), **Katherine Pratt** (she/her), **Jordan Blisk** (he/him), **Marci Hodge** (she/her), **Laila Ireland** (she/her), **Kristine Reeves** (she/her/ella), and **Fawn Sanchez** (she/her), **Lourdes Tiglao** (she/her).



“I could not be more excited to welcome our newest Board members,” said **Lindsay Church, MVA’s Co-Founder and Executive Director**. “Each of these individuals brings a wealth of knowledge, deep understanding of marginalized communities, and the empathy and lived experiences that will serve our members and all minority veterans well. MVA’s mission is rooted in pushing boundaries and finding innovative solutions to the greatest challenges we face as a community. Each of these tremendous individuals represents a revolutionary addition to that process.”

“As MVA continues to grow leaps and bounds, it finds itself well-positioned to ascend to the next level -- building on its strong foundation to increase programming, expand services, and continue to grow a community that its members, new and old, feel welcomed in and proud to belong to,” said **Uma Mishra-Newbery, Interim Chair**. “This board represents so much, but especially the crucial intersectionality and commitment to the MVA community of veterans at large. This new Board, the first of its kind, made up of BIPOC and gender-diverse veterans, is leadership that looks like the community it serves, which in times like this cannot be understated. On behalf of the rest of the Board, I look forward to continuing the great work that the community of volunteers and the MVA family have been committed to from its humble beginnings just a handful of years ago.”

“Every solution we as an organization build will be guided by experiences from an entirely BIPOC and gender diverse board including women and transgender veterans,” **Lindsay Church continued**. “These



are proven leaders, problem solvers, and strong voices who have pushed boundaries in spite of existing in a community where their identities and lived experiences have often been discounted or tokenized. By making their voices heard loud and clear, we can continue to push for real and substantive change for minority veterans.”

**Uma Mishra-Newbery (she/her), U.S. Army Veteran, Interim Chair**

Uma Mishra-Newbery serves as MVA’s Acting Chair. She is a global social justice and women’s rights leader, transformative speaker, and the former Executive Director of Women’s March Global. She is the current campaign manager of the #FreeLoujain campaign and the initiator and lead facilitator of the Racial Equity Index.

**Katherine Pratt, PhD (she/her), U.S. Air Force Veteran, Treasurer**

Katherine Pratt, PhD is a Co-Founder of Minority Veterans of America. She currently serves as a Program Manager, Ethics and Society at Microsoft who is dedicated to incorporating ethical and equitable practices in technology development. She holds a PhD in electrical and computer engineering (emphasis in privacy and policy) from the University of Washington, and has also worked closely with the ACLU and Congress as an advocate for diverse and intersectional veteran identities.

**Jordan Blik (he/him), U.S. Air Force Veteran**

Jordan Blik is the Associate Director of Chapters at the American Constitution Society and the Executive Director of the Colorado Name Change Project. Jordan also previously worked with Lambda Legal while attending law school. Jordan is an active mentor in the LGBTQ+ community and has dedicated his career to developing and executing programming and initiatives to protect and expand equality for marginalized groups.

**Marci Hodge (she/her), U.S Army Veteran**

Marci Hodge is a Senior Policy Advisor in the Office for Global Women’s Issues at the State Department. She is a former sexual assault prevention and response program manager. Marci brings 21 years of experience and a lifetime of advocacy for women’s rights and a drive to advance issues most important to women and girls across the globe.

**Laila Ireland (she/her), U.S. Army Veteran**

Laila Ireland is a Healthcare Management and Administration Supervisor at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs supporting a Level III Trauma Center outpatient medical administration department. She is active with SPARTA and within local AAPI and LGBTQ communities. Laila also appeared in the Emmy-nominated short film "Transgender, at War and in Love" followed by the 2017 SXSW Film Festival Best Feature Documentary Audience Award "Transmilitary". -

**Kristine Reeves (she/her/ella), Veteran Supporter, Military Family Member**

Kristine Reeves is a Consultant and Legislative Director at the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and previously served as a WA State Congressional Representative. She is also a member of the Truman National Security Project. She brings a dedication to addressing issues on state and local level with a clear focus on putting people first, navigating political, social, and economic challenges with an eye on the personal impact.

**Fawn Sanchez (she/her), U.S. Army Veteran**



Fawn Sanchez is Shoshone Bannock from Fort Hall, Idaho, and Carizzo-Comecrudo, an Indigenous tribe in Mexico. Fawn is an AWS Program Manager & Senior Curriculum Developer for Enterprise Support Training at Amazon. She is a proven leader who connects with all with an unrivaled passion and caring nature. She has been a steadfast advocate for indigenous people and approaches diversity with a lens that focuses on lifting the stories and voices of those often marginalized and underrepresented.

**Lourdes Tiglao (she/her), U.S. Air Force Veteran**

Lourdes Tiglao works on Global Partnerships at Airbnb. She previously was a Clay Hunt Fellow at Team Rubicon. During her time at TR, Lourdes created regional projects to amplify and increase diversity in the 6 state region including social media engagement, local panel discussions, and increased minority recruitment through online and offline channels and platforms. She also is a Chapter Director for the National Truman Security Project.

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*Minority Veterans of America (MVA) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that was designed to create belonging and advance equity and justice for underrepresented veterans, including BIPOC, women, LGBTQ, and religious minority veterans. The organization aims to transform the narrative of the American veteran by building an interconnected community, fostering greater understanding of our memberships' identities, and serving minority veterans through the development of targeted programming and advocacy. For more information, visit [www.minorityvets.org](http://www.minorityvets.org).*