

NAACP recognizes DAV Membership Director

July 18, 2008



National Membership Director Anthony L. "Tony" Baskerville was awarded the Jesse Brown Distinguished Leadership Award at the 34th Annual National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Award Dinner July

16.

A disabled Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War era, Director Baskerville began his career as a National Service Officer in 1975. Early on, he served as a Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program Coordinator. Before PTSD was officially recognized, Director Baskerville was one of the pioneering service officers who addressed the needs of homeless veterans.

He's served on the President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities under President Clinton, and the U.S. Small Business Administration's Veterans Affairs Task Force for Entrepreneurship.

Since taking the reigns of the membership department in 2005, Director Baskerville has worked tirelessly to ensure the organization continues to meet its membership goals. He's led the charge to reach out to veterans of more-recent conflicts. With 1.2 million members, the director is responsible for maintaining the strength and community support needed for the DAV to carry out its mission.

Currently, he is working closely with Information Technology professionals to develop new methods for outreach and recruiting, including the use of social networking sites to

initiate new avenues for veterans to communicate.

The Jesse Brown Distinguished Leadership Award recognizes leaders who work diligently to ensure that all veterans are provided the benefits and services they have earned through honorable service to their country.

Past recipients include Congressman Lane Evans, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Congressman Charles B. Rangel, and Dr. Erwin Randolph Parson.

Jesse Brown is a former DAV leader who was appointed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Jan. 22, 1993. He served in that post until 1997. A combat-disabled Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, Secretary Brown is remembered as one of the nation's premiere veterans' advocates.

As the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, he expanded the services offered to female veterans, homeless veterans and veterans who were exposed to illness-causing chemicals as a result of military service. Secretary Brown died on August 15, 2002 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

According to Director Baskerville, the award was of particular significance because Secretary Brown was a mentor and friend.

"I was one of many young veterans who had the extreme privilege of learning from Jesse. Receiving an award that recognizes his legacy is an unimaginable honor," said Director Baskerville. "I'm grateful to the DAV for giving me the opportunity to serve so many of our nation's deserving veterans and their families and grateful for the NAACP for taking the time to recognize all of our contributions."

"I could think of no greater candidate for this award," said National Adjutant Arthur Wilson. "I think if Jesse were still with us he would agree. Tony has earned this recognition through three decades of service, and the entire DAV extends its congratulations to him and his family."