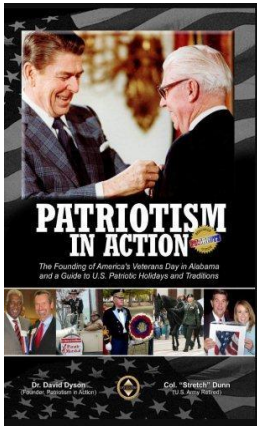


# Patriotism in Action Tribute to the Founder of Veterans Day 1947

Commemoration of Raymond Weeks, Birmingham, AL for America's 1st Veterans Day

November 10, 2023, 4:30-4:45 p.m. / Sheraton Birmingham (reception 5 p.m., banquet 6 p.m.)



Chair: Col. Bob Barefield, USA (Ret) & Nancy Barefield

Emcee/Speaker: Dr. David Dyson, Historian, National Veterans Day & co-author, Patriotism in Action

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Presented by Patriotism in Action & National Veterans Day in Birmingham

## Purpose and Hosts

**Good evening.** Veterans and patriots, students, visitors to Birmingham, and guests, welcome to our *Tribute to the Founder of Veterans Day*, called by President Reagan the “driving force” for Veterans Day in America. My name is David Dyson, serving as Historian for National Veterans Day and director of Patriotism in Action and Compassion Ranch with chairmen Bob and Nancy Barefield.

Other **hosts** receiving you:

- ◆ National Veterans Day: Mr. Mark Ryan and Major General David Burford.
- ◆ Family of Raymond Weeks: his daughter, Barbara Minor, plus grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Barbara has the Presidential Citizens Medal President Reagan presented to her daddy. Members of the family will carry the parade banner on display donated by Patriotism in Action.
- ◆ Barbara, in appreciation of the Weeks Family for 76 years of service, Nancy Barefield presents roses to you.
- ◆ Barbara, Lori Banes designed the flags on the cover of the program entitled, *Daddy's Honor*. Barbara, we do this tribute in your *Daddy's honor!* For you kids, you may wonder why we present this program and publish books. We seek to support veterans and Veterans Day, plus Birmingham and Alabama, and at a personal level, we hope the history and character traits shared will inspire you to be patriots who take action, serving at home, school, profession, and community.
- ◆ You can see in your handout 7 main contributions in our program. We are adding a brief meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance before we Pledge because it is important to know and internalize as part of the belief systems of Americans.

## The Pledge of Allegiance

- ◆ Our Pledge was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy. The American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution recommended changes in the 1920s, and the Pledge has been revised with the last change coming on Flag Day 1954, when Congress passed legislation adding the words “under God.” President Eisenhower signed legislation approving the Pledge and that year signed Veterans Day into law.

Our Pledge has 31 words in 10 phrases.

1. I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE – I, you, we promise to serve and be loyal to our country.
2. TO THE FLAG--our country’s symbol of freedom recognized around the world.
3. OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – 50 independent states joined together through a constitution.
4. AND TO THE REPUBLIC--a country led by representatives chosen by the people.
5. FOR WHICH IT STANDS--a defender of human rights and fairness for all.
6. ONE NATION--a single nation for many people.
7. UNDER GOD--affirmation our individual rights come from a source higher than our government and should not be infringed.
8. INDIVISIBLE--our country must not divide into parts, focusing on common ground, and staying together even in disagreements.
9. WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE – freedom to live one’s life and be treated fairly.
10. FOR ALL--for each citizen in our country, you and me!

*Interpreted and shared by Dr. David Dyson and Col. Bob Barefield, Patriotism in Action*

[www.PatriotismInAction.us](http://www.PatriotismInAction.us)

## Posting of Colors

- ◆ Presenting the Flag we salute known as posting of colors is an honored tradition in a patriotic America, presented here thanks to The 1st Pennsylvania Regiment reenactors led by Chris Long portraying Major James Moore. *Sir, present colors.*

## Pledge

- ◆ Now, a great-granddaughter of Raymond Weeks, Hailey Minor, will lead us citing the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ◆ Attention-Salute-Pledge:

*I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America  
and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God,  
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

## Prayer

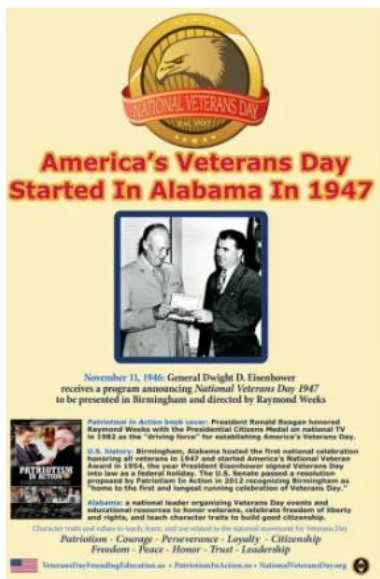
- ◆ Our prayer is led by US Navy veteran and Chaplain for the Alabama Department American Legion, Duke Martin....

## Our Purpose: Educate and Inspire Citizens – Veterans Day Started in Alabama

America's first National Veterans Day to honor ALL who served our military has been commemorated every November 11 since 1947. Many people in Birmingham and at the Pentagon knew Veterans Day started here, though veterans came to us years ago citing most people in the nation did not know. We learned, 20 years ago, Congress recognized another state as official founder even though they started their Veterans Day 7 years after Birmingham. When we learned Alabama and Raymond Weeks had lost their official legacy, we spent much of 2012 petitioning the US Senate to restore the legacy of Birmingham, Alabama, and Raymond Weeks.

The main reason we lost the recognition: because most Americans never learned the *who-where-when* of Veterans Day in school. The solution: we need all veteran organizations, schools, and civic clubs to cite at least the first fact on your card **7 key facts to proclaim at Veterans Day events, America's Veterans Day started in Birmingham in 1947.**

Please use the card given to you with your program or give to someone who will:



### 7 Facts to Proclaim during your Veterans Day Program

Host a Veterans Day program or private commemoration during November 1-11 or October-November meetings. Inform participants and display this next to the poster:

1. America's first Veterans Day was organized in Alabama in 1947 by Raymond Weeks, WW II veteran & former Alabama student.
2. Alabama led the national movement after gaining support in 1946 from General Eisenhower, who as U.S. president established the federal holiday in 1954.
3. The National Veteran Award was established in Birmingham in 1954.
4. President Reagan honored Mr. Weeks with the Presidential Citizens Medal on national television at the White House in 1982.
5. The United States Senate passed a resolution restoring the official historical roots of starting Veterans Day in Alabama in 2012.
6. The book *Patriotism in Action* features the history of Veterans Day born in Birmingham plus 10 character traits and values to inspire students.
7. The web page [www.VeteransDayFoundingEducation.us](http://www.VeteransDayFoundingEducation.us) provides free resources useful for teachers, students, parents, speakers, and journalists so you can take action to serve students and state advancing this historical distinction.



Hailey Minor, great-granddaughter of Raymond Weeks presenting these points at her school

A few points good to know and teach supporting those on the card:

1. When WW II ended in 1945 thousands across the nation had the idea we needed to honor veterans of all wars, not just Raymond Weeks. But he was the patriot who took ACTION to create National Veterans Day. Thus, Patriotism in Action.
2. In 1946, Weeks and US Senator John Sparkman visited Gen. Eisenhower at the Pentagon to present the plan of a National Veterans Day for the following year.
3. In 1947, The 1<sup>st</sup> National Veterans Day took place in Birmingham. At the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day in the 11<sup>th</sup> month, Gen. Eisenhower sent a telegram to Mr. Weeks urging Alabamians to continue to do this work so it would spread across the nation.
4. In 1954, President Eisenhower signed Veterans Day into national law. Birmingham created the National Veteran Award.

5. In 1982, Elizabeth Dole, wrote a briefing for President Reagan, describing Mr. Weeks as “the Father of Veterans Day.” On November 11 that year, Barbara Weeks Minor was at the White House with her mother and sister. President Reagan, on national TV, honored Mr. Weeks as the “driving force” of Veterans Day while presenting the Presidential Citizens Medal.
6. A few years later, after 40 years of loyal service to his concept, Mr. Weeks died and “a grateful nation” placed a monument in Linn Park across the street from the original home of Veterans Day, Boutwell Auditorium.
7. In 2012, the U.S. Senate restored the lost legacy of starting Veterans Day through resolution that the oldest and longest running Veterans Day started in Birmingham.

As noted on your card, you can use handouts and videos to see and teach at [VeteransDayFoundingEducation.us](http://VeteransDayFoundingEducation.us).

### **Wreath Dedication**

We have a wreath to present in memory of Mr. Weeks and veterans no longer with us. Barbara Weeks Minor is escorted by Charles “Charlie” Aucoin, National Vice Commander of The American Legion, assisted by Col. Bob Barefield.

### **Announcements and Adjournment**

If you attend the parade tomorrow, we hope you pay attention to the riderless horse. His name is Hank, nickname Tank. Hank served 10 years in the US Army at Arlington National Cemetery as caparisoned horse aka riderless horse for veterans such as General Colin Powell. Hank and fellow military working equine Lincoln retired this year and since before July 4 live in Central Alabama as part of Compassion Ranch. Over 15 years ago Patriotism in Action led by Bob & Nancy Barefield started the tradition of riderless horses in the parade. Hank the Tank will be the first horse from The Old Guard in the Birmingham Parade.

As we close, thank you for attending to support Patriotism in Action and Veterans Day. Thanks to Bob and Nancy Barefield for directing our program over 15 years. We invite Barbara Minor and Kyle Minor to comment, then Mark Ryan will announce what you need to know this evening and tomorrow....

We invite you to visit the table and see photos and meet the Weeks Family and more of us. We are adjourned.



[www.PatriotismInAction.us](http://www.PatriotismInAction.us) - [www.CompassionRanch.org](http://www.CompassionRanch.org) - [www.LifeLeadersInstitute.org](http://www.LifeLeadersInstitute.org)