

United States of America

In God We Trust



Whistleblowing - To Inform and Serve

There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction. [John F. Kennedy](#) (1917 - 1963)

Veterans, elected officials, invited guests, colleagues, family and friends - Good Morning and welcome to the 2003 Memorial Day celebration. I am truly humbled to be standing before you and for the grand honor the Albany Joints Veteran Committee has bestowed upon Dr. Fudin and me.

I am not a veteran; however, I am a devout admirer of veterans. My dad, Frank Mariano, here today, is a Marine Corp veteran who served in WWII and Korea. He was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for battles fought in Iwo Jima and Saipan. My grandfather was a US Army veteran. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross in W.W.I while serving in France. My brother also served in the Army and is a Vietnam era veteran. I must say I have always envied their service to their country. The pride I saw on my dad's face when he spoke of his time being a Marine cannot be described. I often wondered what that enormous pride must feel like.

Since I was not privileged to be a veteran, I decided the next best thing would be to assist veterans. I am a pharmacist. I am a Pharmacy Manager. I have 23 years of service with the VA. I have talked to, laughed with, cried with, picked up and cheered up, many a veteran. I saw in their eyes both the happiness and the sadness that comes with serving their country. I have been forever touched by many a veteran's story as they tell their tales of wars long ago – of conflicts won and lost.

What I am not, is a rebel. I am not one who would cause any controversy or confrontation. I did my job day in and day out with nary a thought of conflict. Then it happened - injustice to veterans. While I had seen some policies and procedures I did not agree with, this incident was different. My conscience and upbringing said NO! This is wrong. This cannot be done. I spoke with my dad over the happenings at the VA and he supported my decision to speak out. Little did I know that it would be nearly an 8-year battle that I would have to fight.

I am particularly fond of a John F. Kennedy quote, which I came across recently. Kennedy said, ***“There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks of comfortable inaction.”*** The words that jumped out at me in this quote were “comfortable inaction.” If our soldiers lived by these words, where would our world be today? If our government practiced “comfortable inaction” nothing would ever get done. Comfortable inaction in the business world would most likely be failure.

We all get complacent in our every day lives. Inaction can be comfortable. No one wants to rock the boat. Not many of us enjoy controversy in our lives. But as Kennedy said, “the risks of action are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.”

I hope all of us can devote our lives to a “program of action.” Memorial Day is a holiday designated to remember and honor America's fallen veterans. Get involved. Help a veteran. Get to know and support the Gold Star mothers and wives, Volunteer at a VA hospital. Speak out when need be.

The war dead we honor today would be the first to say that there are risks and costs to a “program of action.” They were men and women of pure action. Their “program of action” cost them their lives. But their brave actions won us our country's freedoms. For that we are forever grateful. -- God Bless you all.