



**West Point**  
ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 21, 2023**

**THE HONORABLE ELIZABETH DOLE TO RECEIVE THE 2023  
WEST POINT ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES SYLVANUS THAYER AWARD**

**West Point, NY:** The West Point Association of Graduates is pleased to announce that the Honorable Elizabeth Dole will receive the 2023 Sylvanus Thayer Award. The award will be presented on September 21, 2023, during ceremonies hosted by Lieutenant General Steven W. Gilland, Class of 1990, 61st Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

West Point Association of Graduates Board Chairman, the Honorable Robert A. McDonald, Class of 1975, said, “Whether as a government official or as a leader of both national and international non-profit organizations, Elizabeth Dole has been a stalwart for military members and veterans. For example, with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, she has led a movement to raise awareness of the plight that millions of spouses, parents, and others face in caring for their wounded loved ones, and she has led the crusade to generate critical resources to help these hidden heroes. Also, as the former Chair of the VA’s Veterans’ Family, Caregiver and Survivor Federal Advisory Committee, she oversaw dozens of recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs focused on improving benefits and services for veterans’ families, caregivers, and survivors. Her work has resulted in significant veterans’ and caregivers’ eligibility changes, critical benefits for survivors, and the expansion of in-home care opportunities for pre-9/11 war era veterans, which has not only saved lives but also provided the respite and hope that caregivers need to keep their veterans safely at home. Combining this with Dole’s lifetime of service to the country in other ways (as a U.S. senator, a cabinet member for two presidential administrations, and the president of the American Red Cross), it’s clear that she represents the values of West Point: Duty, Honor, Country. I am so pleased that the West Point Association of Graduates is honoring her for her achievements.”

“West Point’s distinguished graduates are some of our nation’s finest examples of ‘Duty, Honor, Country,’ so it will be my great honor to receive the Thayer Award that reflects their values and patriotic spirit,” said Senator Dole. “I have been inspired by so many of the accomplished servant leaders who have also accepted this award, including my late husband, Bob Dole, just as I continue to be inspired by the bravery and determination of the young Americans who join West Point’s alumni each year, this rising generation of Army leaders.”

Elizabeth Dole graduated from Duke University in 1958, receiving the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award, a national prize given to graduating seniors, alumni, and faculty of selected colleges and universities in the Southern United States for excellence of character and service to humanity. She later earned an M.A. Ed. from Harvard University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School. Her public-service career began in 1967 when she became a staff assistant to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Johnson administration.

After a six-year term on the Federal Trade Commission and a two-year term as director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, Dole was the first woman to be appointed U.S. Secretary of Transportation, which also made her the first woman to have served as the head of a branch of the U.S. military, as the U.S. Coast Guard was under the Department of Transportation at the time. As the Transportation Secretary, Dole worked to raise states’ drinking ages to 21, issued landmark regulation that brought about state seat belt laws, and endorsed the installation of air bags and center high-mounted stop lamps in new cars. In 1989, she was appointed to be the 20th U.S. Secretary of Labor and made work-place safety and at-risk youth her top priorities.

Dole received national recognition in 1991 when she became the second woman to lead the American Red Cross (the first being the founder of the organization, Clara Barton). During her tenure, she restructured the world’s

largest humanitarian organization, transforming the way the Red Cross collects, tests, and distributes half of the nation's blood supply. Dole announced her departure from the Red Cross in January 1999 and two months later announced her candidacy for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination, becoming the first viable female candidate from a major political party. Two years later, she became the first woman to represent North Carolina in the U.S. Senate, serving for one term. While a senator, she served on the Armed Services Committee.

In 2012, Dole established *The Elizabeth Dole Foundation*. Two years prior, her husband, Bob Dole—former Senator from Kansas, 1996 presidential candidate, 1976 vice presidential candidate, World War II veteran, and the 2004 recipient of the Thayer Award—suffered a medical emergency and spent almost a year recovering at Walter Reed Medical Center, providing Dole a firsthand account of what it means to be a military caregiver. The Foundation's "Hidden Heroes" campaign brought attention to the issues that military caregivers face every day and established a national registry of caregivers that offers helpful resources and support. Dole also served as Chair of the VA's Veterans Family, Caregiver and Survivor (VFCS) Federal Advisory Committee.

Dole has received numerous awards for her continual support of service personnel and veterans. Most recently, she received the Angel of Honor Award from the Armed Services YMCA, the George Marshall Medal from the Association of the United States Army, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Hiring Our Heroes, the Distinguished Service Medal from the American Legion, the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal from the Department of the Army, and the Military Officers Association of America's National Service Award.

### **About the Sylvanus Thayer Award**

The Thayer Award, presented annually since 1958, is the highest honor currently bestowed upon a non-graduate by the West Point Association of Graduates. The selected recipient must be an outstanding citizen of the United States whose service and accomplishments in the national interest exemplify personal devotion to the ideals expressed in the legendary West Point motto: "Duty, Honor, Country." The Award is named for Sylvanus Thayer (Class of 1808), Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point from 1817 to 1833. Thayer is venerated as the "Father of the Military Academy" for improving West Point's academic standards, instilling military discipline and emphasizing honorable conduct, and his statue stands today in a place of honor on the historic Plain at West Point. Past recipients of the Thayer Award include General Ann Dunwoody, Leon Panetta, Robert Mueller, Gary Sinise, Bob Hope, Condoleezza Rice, General Colin Powell, Henry Kissinger, Madeleine Albright, Tom Brokaw, Neil Armstrong, Walter Cronkite, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Dwight Eisenhower. By tradition, the Thayer Award recipient is honored with a full-dress parade by the Corps of Cadets at West Point. Afterwards, the recipient is presented with the Thayer medal and gives a formal address to the Corps. The honoree also has the opportunity to meet with cadets in the classroom and has his or her legacy of Duty, Honor, Country permanently preserved for future cadets in the Thayer Award Room in Taylor Hall at West Point. For a full list of previous Thayer Award recipients, visit [WestPointAOG.org/ThayerAwardrecipients](http://WestPointAOG.org/ThayerAwardrecipients).

### **About the West Point Association of Graduates**

The West Point Association of Graduates (WPAOG) is among America's oldest educational alumni associations. Founded in 1869, the Association was established "to cherish the memories of [its] Alma Mater, and to promote the social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates," many of whom had recently fought against each other in the Civil War. WPAOG has evolved into a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to furthering the ideals and promoting the welfare of West Point, and to serving and supporting the more than 55,000 living West Point graduates. Its philanthropic pursuits maintain a Margin of Excellence for cadets attending the United States Military Academy. For more information see [www.WestPointAOG.org](http://www.WestPointAOG.org).

### **About West Point**

The U. S. Military Academy at West Point is a four-year, co-educational, federal, liberal arts college located 50 miles north of New York City. It was founded in 1802 as America's first college of engineering and continues today as the world's premier leader-development institution, consistently ranked among top colleges in the

country. Its mission remains constant—to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the U. S. Army. For more information, go to [www.westpoint.edu](http://www.westpoint.edu).

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