



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

Wildwood Crest, Greater Wildwood Little League to honor military veterans May 16

WILDWOOD CREST – The Borough of Wildwood Crest and the Greater Wildwood Little League are set to join forces to honor military veterans ahead of a little league baseball game scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, at Higbee Field.

Wildwood Crest residents and military veterans Michael Marino and Samuel Wilson will take part in a ceremonial first pitch at the event as part of Wildwood Crest’s participation in the statewide “We Value Our Veterans” campaign.

All military veterans from Wildwood Crest and military veterans who are the parents or grandparents of current Greater Wildwood Little League baseball, softball or tee ball players are welcome to attend the event.

The pre-game ceremony to honor military veterans is set to begin at 6:30 p.m., followed by a majors division baseball game between Greater Wildwood Lions and Greater Wildwood Raging Waters at 7 p.m.

Higbee Field is located at 6000 Atlantic Avenue (Aster Road and Atlantic Avenue).

The statewide “We Value Our Veterans” campaign is designed to encourage counties, municipalities, businesses and academic institutions to honor and value the sacrifices, patriotism and bravery displayed by men and women who have served in the various branches of the United States military.

Mike Marino, a Wildwood Crest resident for 15 years, served at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina from 1977 through 1981 as a Combat Controller, an elite special operations force that specializes in all aspects of air-ground communication. Combat Controllers are trained in underwater and maritime operations, freefall parachuting and many other deployment methods and are often assigned individually or as a team to Army Special Forces, Army Rangers, Army SEALs and Delta Force to provide expert airfield seizure, airstrike control and communications capabilities.

Marino was also part of the Combat Control School Cadre for two years beginning in 1980. He later separated from active duty and was stationed at Willow Grove Air Reserve Facility Communications Squadron from 1981 through 1997. He retired as a Master Sergeant while serving as the Chief of Maintenance, responsible for managing computer, telephone and radio equipment.

Marino is currently volunteering his time in assisting the borough’s efforts in the statewide “We Value Our Veterans” campaign.

Sam Wilson has been a Wildwood Crest resident for 12 years. The son of a three-star general, Wilson began his military career as a commissioned regular army officer from ROTC at the University of Alabama in 1969. He completed Basic, Airborne, Ranger and Jungle Warfare courses that same year and served two years as an infantry captain in Vietnam beginning in 1970. Wilson then spent two separate three-year stints (1972-74 and 1985-1987) in Special Forces (Green Beret) Officer Training and service with the 7th Special Forces Group and later with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command. He was given schooling, staff and command assignments from 1975 through 1980 and held duties that included company commander, associate editor of *Military Review*, infantry division training management officer and battalion operations officer. He served tours of duty with three different infantry divisions – 7th Infantry, Fort Order, Calif. (1981-84); 2nd Infantry, Republic of Korea (1984-85); and 6th Infantry, Alaska (1987-89).

Following 27 months of battalion command, Wilson retired in 1989 with 20 years of active service in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His overseas service included stints in Panama, Vietnam, Korea and Honduras. Wilson is the recipient of many awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service and Campaign Ribbons, the Republic of Korea Service Ribbon and the National Defense Service Ribbon. He's a five-time recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal and a two-time recipient of the Army Achievement Medal.

Wilson, his father, and his son Vaughn constitute three continuous generations of combat veteran army paratroopers. Vaughn, now a disabled veteran, was a combat medic with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Afghanistan in 2005-06 and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal For Valor and the Purple Heart.

Wilson is a past volunteer committeeperson on the Wildwood Crest Green Team.

For more information about the pre-game ceremony to honor military veterans, call (609) 523-0202 or log on to gwll.org. For more information on the "We Value Our Veterans" campaign, log on to nj.gov/military/community/award-grant-charitable-programs/wvov/.

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