

Hear it From the Judge

Judge Randall J. Slieter

www.judgeslieter.com

8th Judicial District Judge

Olivia, MN

Honoring our Military Men and Women

The following is an excerpt of a Memorial Day address I gave at the Danube school as part of the Danube American Legion Memorial Day program.

I wish to discuss the phrase “public service” and the word “honor” as we remember the great service our military men and women do now, and have provided, for our country. These terms apply equally to the family and friends who remain here while their loved one is serving overseas. We can show our honor and thanks for this sacrifice by doing public service.

Public service has at least two meanings. We consider those whose employment involves serving the public as public servants. For instance, teachers and law enforcement serve the public in their separate career roles. Teachers are dedicated to educating and directing our children and probably have the next greatest influence on our children other than parents. Law enforcement officers serve the public’s safety and enforce our laws and often do so at personal risk of harm. Teachers and law enforcement officers have public service as a major component of their career endeavor.

The other form of public service focuses on the word servant. That is, doing good works for others in need to make our community and country an even better place. We have numerous formal organizations which exist to so serve. The Legion and VFW clubs help others. Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, as well as many church and civic groups, exist to do works of service in the community. There are countless additional examples of good works people do simply because their neighbor and friend need help.

Our military men and women combine these meanings of public service. Whether full time or part time, these soldiers are learning skills and enhancing leadership. But these soldiers also show the greatest true public service commitment by serving their country at great personal risk. Their family and friends sacrifice in public service too as they fill the void left by their missing soldier.

Another word which, when combined with public service, describes what our soldiers do for our country, is honor. Honor is a positive word and it also describes well what we think of our military members and their service to our country. When we say we are honored to meet some-

one, we are telling that person we feel privileged to meet them. We believe the honorable title, whether referring to the President, the Governor, or a Judge, is one of respect and admiration for that position.

We think of honor too when we think of the great service to our country that our military men and women perform. It is an honor for these soldiers to perform a public service to our country and it is an honor for us to know they do so to preserve our freedom and liberty.

As we recently honored Memorial Day and as we approach Independence Day, may we celebrate the great public service our honorable soldiers perform and show our thanks by performing service to others in need.