



FOUNDERS
COMMISSION

DIAMONDS: TOPGUN UNVEILS GUEST PANELIST, PARTNER NONPROFIT CAUSES

*U.S. Navy CAPT to Join TOPGUN Instructor, ESPN SportsCenter Anchor as Featured Guests;
DIAMONDS Scholar Program, Disabled American Veterans Blackhawk Chapter Unveiled as Causes*

ROCKFORD, Ill., June 7, 2023: Founders Commission (FC) is thrilled to share that **Captain Deborah Davis Mclvy**, deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy and Rockford native, is returning home next week to join the **DIAMONDS: TOPGUN** speaker lineup as a featured panelist. In addition and through the DIAMONDS: TOPGUN platform, Founders Commission is honored to unveil its support of two local causes – the **DIAMONDS Scholar** post-secondary youth scholarship program *and* the **Disabled Veterans of America (DAV) Blackhawk Life Chapter 29**.

A storytelling experience honoring the region’s exemplary brands and people, DIAMONDS: TOPGUN is set for 7 p.m. Thursday, June 15, at the Emery Air North Hangar in Rockford. The purpose of this year’s DIAMONDS program is to amplify the community’s prowess in aerospace and military endeavors through the stories of **Lieutenant Commander Michael Andrews** (a U.S. Navy TOPGUN instructor and Rockford native), **Nicole Briscoe** (ESPN SportsCenter anchor and Roscoe native) and **CAPT Davis Mclvy**.

“Words can’t express how honored and thrilled I am to be a part of such a historic event,” said CAPT Davis Mclvy, a 1989 Auburn High School graduate who works at the Pentagon. “DIAMONDS is an absolute gem that will change the trajectory of Rockford’s cultural North Star!”

Founders Commission is encouraging DIAMONDS: TOPGUN attendees and the general public to consider supporting two important giveback causes, including the launch of the DIAMONDS Scholar youth scholarship program and DAV Blackhawk Life Chapter 29. Donations of any denomination can be made via the [DIAMONDS: TOPGUN Eventbrite page](#) (click on the Get Tickets button to choose your cause), or by visiting <https://www.founderscommission.org/diamonds>.

Administered by the Founders Commission, **DIAMONDS Scholar** youth scholarships will be eligible to two high school seniors, including one graduating female and one graduating male attending high school in Boone, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago counties. Scholarships (amount to be announced) will be awarded for post-secondary schooling and/or technical training. In alignment with this year’s DIAMONDS: TOPGUN theme, priority will be given in 2023-24 to applicants interested in aerospace- and military-related career paths. The DIAMONDS Scholar application period will open in Fall 2023 at www.FoundersCommission.org.

Founders Commission is also honored to leverage DIAMONDS: TOPGUN as a donation platform for the **Disabled American Veterans Blackhawk Life Chapter 29**. Based locally at Veterans Memorial Hall in downtown Rockford, DAV Blackhawk is the local chapter of the DAV, a charity dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. In the Rockford region and around the country, the DAV ensures that veterans and their families have access to a full range of benefits available to them, it fights for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill, and it educates the public about

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the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back into civilian life. For more information on the national and local chapter, click [DAV HQ](#) and [DAV Blackhawk Life Chapter 29](#).

“A critical component of the work we’re doing at the Founders Commission is leveraging success to give back – the DIAMONDS series is the perfect vehicle for us to do just that,” said **Nick Povalitis**, founder/president of Founders Commission. “Through the DIAMONDS Scholar youth program and the work that the DAV Blackhawk Life Chapter 29 does locally to support veterans, DIAMONDS: TOPGUN becomes a much more meaningful experience that we’re thankful to be a part of.”

A formal attire celebration, DIAMONDS: TOPGUN features dinner, live entertainment, a keynote presentation, interactive panel, cash bar, aircraft static displays, and other surprise elements. Tickets are \$125 and can be purchased at [www.FoundersCommission.org/Diamonds](http://wwwFOUNDERSCommission.org/Diamonds).

Special thanks to these DIAMONDS: TOPGUN partners:

- **Champion Partner:** Lexus of Rockford
- **1834 Club Partners:** Emery Air, Hard Rock Casino Rockford, Jim and Pam Keeling, Kelley Williamson Company, MembersAlliance Credit Union, Plus Seven Company, Savant Wealth Management, SupplyCore, Xfinity
- **Media/TV Partner:** Eyewitness News (WTVO/WQRF)
- **Supporting Partners:** Carpetland USA, Code 1 Aviation, GreenFire, Kaney Aerospace, Luxe Productions, Prographics, Ron Clewer, Winnebago County

About Founders Commission: A certified 501(c)(3) charitable organization, Founders Commission celebrates and leverages the Rockford region’s excellence and ingenuity in business, arts and entertainment, and sports for brand, economic and social good. Inspired by the region’s lineage of success tracing back to 1834 when settlers first arrived along a rocky ford, Founders Commission was established in 2023 as a charitable, educational, civic and scientific nonprofit governed by community advocates and business leaders.

Media Contact: Nick Povalitis, Info@FoundersCommission.org, 815.708.1644.

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