



**IN MEMORY OF COLONEL JOSEPH SMITH,**  
USMC (retired) and  
Former Director of  
The County of L.A. Department of Military and Veterans Affairs



***Semper Fidelis***





*Colonel Joseph Smith "Colonel" as he was known by his staff and friends, was a respected leader of the County of Los Angeles Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) for over 24 years. He assumed the duties of Director of MVA on November 28, 1988.*

*He was a military kid who followed his father's footsteps, courageously serving in the United States Marine Corps for 30 years, and retiring with the rank of Colonel. His combat service earned him the Silver Star, Purple Heart, and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry medals. During his military career, he visited 39 countries and received awards from 5 foreign nations.*

*He was the recipient of numerous awards to include the U.S. President's Gold, Silver, and Bronze Volunteer Service, numerous Congressional, State, County, and City Certificates of Appreciation, awards from the Department of Defense, and other local Veterans Services Organizations. He was also one of the founders of the United States Veterans Initiative (U.S. VETS) and spent 14 years as Chairman for their Board of Directors. He was fluent in 5 languages to include English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.*

*As the Director of MVA, his loyalty and dedication did not cease once he retired from the Marine Corps. Many staff describe the Colonel as a true Marine - "Always Faithful" because of his efforts to always ensure his staff was well-supported. Known for his leadership by example, he was described as the first to arrive to work and the last to leave each day. "Semper Fi, Do or Die" was his motto as he took great efforts to always look out for others before himself.*

*Sadly, on Thursday, November 22, 2018, Colonel Joseph Smith passed away.*

*He left a true impact on those he served both in military service and on the job. We salute you Colonel Joseph Smith. You will be greatly missed. Semper Fi.*

