

Disney Chairman and CEO Robert A. Iger and First Lady Michelle Obama Give Keynote Remarks at Disney ‘Veterans Institute’

Complimentary ‘Veterans Institute’ Workshop Encourages hundreds of companies to Hire Military Veterans

One-day seminar at Walt Disney World Resort features veterans’ stories of transitioning to the civilian workforce

(Nov. 14, 2013) — Burbank, Calif. and Lake Buena Vista, Fla. – Today, Disney Chairman and CEO Robert A. Iger, First Lady Michelle Obama and ABC News Anchor Bob Woodruff gave keynote addresses at Disney’s first-ever *Veterans Institute* workshop at Walt Disney World Resort. Building on its successful *Heroes Work Here* initiative to hire, train and support military veterans, Disney hosted the free *Veterans Institute* workshop to inspire other companies to employ servicemen and women transitioning to the private sector.

The First Lady has made supporting military families and U.S. troops a top priority. In 2011 Mrs. Obama and Dr. Jill Biden launched *Joining Forces*, an initiative dedicated to connecting servicemen and women, veterans, and military spouses with the resources they need to find jobs at home. Through this initiative, Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden have met with military families, learned about their successes and challenges, and have connected them with businesses and non-profit organizations as they look for work in the private sector. *Joining Forces* highlights the workforce potential of veterans and military spouses, expands employment and career development opportunities for veterans and military spouses, and helps employers create military family-friendly workplaces.

On January 29, 2006, while reporting on U.S. and Iraqi security forces, Woodruff was seriously injured by a roadside bomb that struck his vehicle near Taji, Iraq. In February 2007, just 13 months after being wounded in Iraq, Woodruff returned to ABC News with his first on-air report, “To Iraq and Back: Bob Woodruff Reports.” The hour-long, primetime documentary chronicled his traumatic brain injury (TBI), his painstaking recovery and the plight of thousands of service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with similar injuries. Woodruff continues to cover traumatic brain injuries for all ABC News broadcasts and platforms and was honored with a Peabody Award in 2008 for his reporting on the subject.

In February 2007, Woodruff and his wife, Lee, co-wrote a bestselling memoir, *In an Instant*, chronicling his injuries in Iraq and how their family persevered through a time of intense trauma and uncertainty. The Woodruff family established the [Bob Woodruff Foundation](#) (BWF) to raise money to assist injured service members, veterans and their families.

[About ‘Veterans Institute’](#)

The day-long *Veterans Institute*, co-sponsored by *Heroes Work Here* and Disney Institute, was designed to help companies build effective veteran-hiring programs of their own. The event featured experts from Disney's *Heroes Work Here*, government officials, veterans, and non-profit veterans service organizations, who shared their experiences, best practices, and tips for making a successful transition from the military to the civilian workforce.

Veterans Institute is the latest effort in Disney's long history of respect and appreciation for the U.S. Armed Services, and leveraged the success of *Heroes Work Here*, which Disney launched in March, 2012 with a commitment to hire more than 1,000 veterans by 2015—a goal the company has already surpassed. This past March, Disney increased its hiring goal to create opportunities for another 1,000 former service members in the next two years.

Highlights of the *Veterans Institute* workshop included: an inside look at *Heroes Work Here*; renowned keynote speakers, panelists, Disney on-air talent and personalities; customized Disney Institute courses; advice and insights from experts and elite veterans support organizations; and stories from veterans about their own transition to the civilian workforce.

Featured speakers and presenters included:

- Rosye Cloud, Senior Advisor on Veteran Employment, Department of Veterans Affairs
- Dr. Susan S. Kelley, Director, Transition to Veteran Program Office, Department of Defense
- Rich Morales, Colonel, U.S. Army and Executive Director, Joining Forces
- Teresa Gerton, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Labor
- Mike Haynie, Executive Director and Founder, Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University

About Disney's *Heroes Work Here*

Supporting the U.S. Armed Forces has long been a Disney tradition, and Disney's *Heroes Work Here* continues that proud legacy with a company-wide initiative to hire, train and support military veterans. Disney introduced the program in March, 2012 with a commitment to hire at least 1,000 veterans by 2015. Having exceeded that goal in the first year alone, with 1,300 veterans hired, the company announced in March, 2013 that it would create opportunities for another 1,000 former service members over the next two years.

Disney's *Heroes Work Here* initiative also features a public awareness campaign to encourage employers across the U.S. to hire former military service members. The campaign includes the free *Veterans Institute* workshop at Walt Disney World, as well as public service [announcements](#) highlighting the skills and experience of veterans who work at Disney. The PSAs direct viewers to the White House's Joining Forces initiative (www.joiningforces.gov) and have aired across Disney's media properties including ESPN, ABC and ABC Family, making more than 500 million impressions.

The third component of Disney's *Heroes Work Here* initiative is philanthropy. Disney's philanthropic support of veteran and military organizations has exceeded \$1 million since the launch of *Heroes Work Here*, and through the Disney VoluntEARS program, employees have engaged in several service projects with veterans organizations in communities around the country.

About Disney Institute

Disney Institute is the professional development arm of The Walt Disney Company [NYSE: DIS]. Since its founding in 1986, Disney Institute has shared the company's time-tested best practices in leadership, management, creativity/innovation, brand loyalty and customer service with millions of professionals around the world.

To participate in the conversation regarding the Disney 'Veterans Institute', please use the hashtag #DisneyVeteransInstitute.