

THE CARGO COURIER

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State bids fond farewell to Tonini

By Sgt. Brandy Mort
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LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini doesn't officially retire until Dec. 7, but representatives of the Kentucky Army and Air National Guard, distinguished guests, friends and family members all gathered to honor the Kentucky adjutant general's legacy during a retirement ceremony here Nov. 21.

After nearly 47 years of service, Tonini leaves behind an unprecedented legacy, not only to the service members he's led and citizens of the commonwealth of Kentucky, but also to those he's served alongside, his colleague said.

"On behalf of the chief of the National Guard Bureau and the other adjutants general not in attendance, we owe you a great deal of gratitude, we thank you for your distinguished service, both in the state and national level," said Lt. Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"On behalf of us all, thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do."

It was an emotional event for Tonini as numerous awards, gifts and tokens of gratitude were bestowed. As he stood at the podium in the ballroom of the Galt House, he couldn't help but pause before addressing the crowd.

"I am so spectacularly proud of what my units, both Army and Air, have been able to accomplish," Tonini said. "When you talk about Kentucky, I guarantee you they are at the top of any list. I want to look around this room and look upon every single one of your faces and say, 'Thank you all.'"

After first retiring in 2003 following a stint as the director of the National Guard's "Your Defenders of Freedom" program at the Pentagon, Tonini was chosen as the 51st adjutant general of the Kentucky Guard.

Just a year later, Tonini provided the decisiveness and effectiveness the commonwealth needed to respond to a catastrophic ice storm in 2009. The storm was the largest call-up of Kentucky Guardsmen in state history, and it set the tone for the operational tempo of Kentucky's Soldiers and Airmen.

Thousands of Kentuckians would deploy overseas and remain fully committed to the needs of the commonwealth. Under Tonini's watch, a new emergency operations center was built and business was expanded at Bluegrass Station.

Read more online at <http://kentuckyguard.com/kentucky-bids-fond-farewell-to-adjutant-general/>



Sgt. Brandy Mort/Kentucky Army National Guard

Members of the Kentucky National Guard command staff present the outgoing adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Edward W. Tonini, with a framed collection of memorabilia from Kentucky units during Tonini's retirement ceremony in Louisville, Ky., Nov. 21.

Nelson concludes 40-year career

The men and women of the Kentucky Air National Guard gathered here Nov. 8 to culminate Brig. Gen. Gregory L. Nelson's 40 years of faithful service to the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the U.S. Air Force. Read more at www.123aw.ang.af.mil

Businesses donate van to 123rd Airman

Christmas came early for a Kentucky Air Guardsman and his family when two local businesses teamed up to give them a refurbished minivan Nov. 20. Staff Sgt. Neil Goodlin and his wife, Amanda, accepted the keys to a 2012 Dodge Caravan following a surprise unveiling at Oxmoor Collision Center. Read more at www.123aw.ang.af.mil

STS troop honored for rendering aid

A pararescueman from the Kentucky Air National Guard received a Community Service Award from the Okaloosa County, Fla., Sheriff's Department May 20 for his actions in rendering assistance to injured motorists following a multi-vehicle traffic accident there. Read more at www.123aw.ang.af.mil

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Discrimination and diversity are not just about skin color or gender

One thing I love about being an American is that we're a country built on a foundation of diversity.

Original American settlers came from European backgrounds made up of Polish, German, British, French and other nationalities, and blended with other diverse groups such as the American Indians and Spaniards. We've been a welcoming nation, but we've also had our share of discrimination.

Discrimination, as it has been historically interpreted, is primarily focused on race or gender, but America is now seeing it highlighted more in the news regarding different religious beliefs and sexual orientation.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 says a person may not be discriminated against on the basis of age, pregnancy, national origin, race, ethnic background, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

But there are other areas in which, although not protected under federal law, people subconsciously discriminate against. For instance: UK vs. U of L fan? Male High School or



Col. Katherine Pfeifer
Commander, 123rd Mission Support Group

Trinity grad? Originally from Kentucky or a transplant? KYANG operator or support airman? Officer vs. enlisted? The list could go on and on.

When you look at discrimination from a wider aperture, there's likely to be a group which you fall into.

One of the Air Force's greatest strengths is the diversity of its people, the Air Force's most precious resource.

Being a diverse organization goes far beyond the raw numbers of female Airmen or non-Caucasian leaders within our ranks.

The experiences that people bring to the table from their different walks of life, regardless of their religion, race, ethnicity or gender, need to be factored into what makes our organization truly diverse and successful.

Opposing viewpoints and perspectives aren't bad; they are what give rise to unexpected, unique solutions to long-standing problems and challenges.

Opposing viewpoints and perspectives define "thinking outside the box" and create a diverse, rich organization that values the contributions of each of its members.

We can learn from each other if the blinders of discrimination are removed. Let us continue to respect different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs — and most of all, take care of each other.

Choose to be the kind of Airman for which this republic stands: "One nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all."

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We welcome your feedback. Please contact the Public Affairs Office directly if you have suggestions for articles or photography. Our office is located in Room 1160 of the Wing Headquarters Building, 1101 Grade Lane, Louisville, KY 40213.

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