

## NAVREF Announces Annual Awardees

Non Profit Association Honors Excellence

**(Washington, D.C., September 18, 2019)** - The National Association of Veterans' Research and Education Foundations (NAVREF) held its fifth annual awards event on September 16<sup>th</sup>, honoring NAVREF members and staff nominated by their peers for demonstrating excellence in support of research and education for Veterans. The awards dinner was hosted by NAVREF CEO Rick Starrs at the Hilton Palacio del Rio in San Antonio, Texas in conjunction with NAVREF's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

The 2019 winners included Ms. Danielle Fleumer of the Seattle Institute for Biomedical and Clinical Research (SIBCR), who was awarded NAVREF's prestigious *Barbara West Award for Distinguished Service*. Other awardees included Ms. Angie Smith, Executive Director of the North Florida Foundation for Research and Education (NFFRE) in Gainesville, Florida, and Ms. Ashley Phillips, Executive Director of the Middle Tennessee Research Institute (MTRI) in Nashville.

Ms. Fleumer was recognized for her outstanding service and dedication both to her nonprofit corporation (NPC) and to NAVREF. She has served in multiple capacities at SIBCR for 18 years, including five years as the Executive Director. In addition to her inspired leadership of one of the nation's largest VA-affiliated research foundations, Ms. Fleumer has been a prolific contributor to the VA-affiliated NPC community. She generously shares her knowledge and expertise with others in a compassionate, confident, and efficient manner. She has led multiple NAVREF training workshops, served as chair of the NAVREF Annual Conference for two consecutive years, and was elected to represent her peers on the NAVREF Board of Directors in 2018.

Ms. Angie Smith took home the NAVREF *Board of Directors Distinguished Service Award* for the turnaround success story she engineered at NFFRE. When she assumed the Executive Director position of NFFRE approximately 2 years ago, NFFRE was facing imminent bankruptcy. Her transformative leadership led to a surge in profitability and renewed financial stability. Ms. Smith developed a more efficient clinical coordinator model and fundamentally reorganized the business plan to make this model operational. She has inspired excitement and passion among NFFRE board members and staff. The future of NFFRE now appears very bright and the Foundation is expected to become a major contributor to the medical center's research portfolio.

Ms. Ashley Phillips was awarded The Innovation and *Best Practices Award* for her creative and collaborative approaches to problem-solving. Ms. Phillips regularly contributes her expertise and insights on the NAVREF community forum, even starting and managing a monthly Book Club. Her signature contribution was leading an initiative to address long-standing billing issues with VA medical centers. Ms. Phillips continues to inspire her peers with her dedication and passion for the mission.

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### About NAVREF

Formed in 1992, NAVREF is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization of research and education foundations affiliated with Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers. These nonprofits, also known as the VA-affiliated nonprofit research and education corporations, are authorized by Congress under 38 USC §§7361-7366 to provide flexible mechanisms for the conduct of research and education at VA facilities nationwide. Currently, NAVREF has 75 members. [www.navref.org](http://www.navref.org)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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