



100 International Golf Drive | Daytona Beach, Florida 32124.1082
386.274.6200 | Fax 386.274.1099 | www.lpga.com

Information

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Biography:

Rear Admiral Marsha J. Evans, U.S. Navy (Retired)



Marsha J. Evans' distinguished career has combined both military service and leadership of the nation's premier non-profit organizations. During her nearly 30-year career with the Navy, Evans distinguished herself as one of only a handful of women to reach the rank of rear admiral, and gained a reputation for forging new ground for women in the military. Admiral Evans held a variety of command positions overseeing multi-million dollar budgets and thousands of employees. She was the Chief of Staff at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis and the first woman to command a U.S. naval station (Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay Area). In 1992, she chaired the task force that developed a strategy to address the gender-based issues that gave rise to the Tailhook situation. Among the actions that resulted was the opening of assignments to women onboard Navy combatant ships. She held the top positions at the Navy Recruiting Command, where she managed 6,000 employees in 1,200 locations and recruited more than 70,000 officers and sailors annually, and then at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. She retired in 1998 as a rear admiral.

In January 1998, Evans assumed leadership of Girl Scouts of the USA, the largest organization representing girls in the world, with troops in every zip code of America. Evans revolutionized the 90-year old organization and modernized its vision and programs for its nearly three million young members. Under her leadership, Girl Scouts created cutting-edge programs in science, technology, sports, money management and community service. Evans updated Girl Scouts' image, enhanced its recruiting practices, and increased its number of adult volunteers to nearly one million, the highest number in the organization's history. Throughout Evans' tenure, Girl Scouts enjoyed a continuous increase in young membership and reached an unprecedented level of diversity as African-American, Asian and a record number of Hispanic girls discovered the organization.

From August 2002 through December 2005, Evans was the 13th President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross, the largest and one of the nation's most distinguished humanitarian aid organizations. With an annual operating budget of more than \$4 billion, the Red Cross assists millions of Americans each year by providing urgent aid to victims of disasters, teaching safety preparedness and lifesaving skills, collecting, processing and distributing nearly half the nation's blood supply, and assisting Armed Forces members and their families. The American Red Cross also provides help and hope to victims of disasters and disease in more than 30 countries.

In 2005 alone, under Evans' leadership, Red Cross volunteers and staff assisted the victims of more than 70,000 natural- and human-caused disasters, from single family fires to large-scale events including the

evacuation of a major American city; collected almost 6.5 million units of blood; trained more than 12 million people in lifesaving skills such as first aid and CPR; helped thousands of U.S. service members separated from their families by military duty stay connected; responded to extraordinary humanitarian emergencies including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma and the devastating December 2004 tsunamis in South Asia; and made major progress in eradicating measles in Africa. Over 1.3 million families received direct emergency Red Cross assistance in the wake of the hurricanes and the flood of New Orleans. For her leadership of the Red Cross response, *Non-Profit Times* named her “Executive of the Year” for 2005.

During her nearly three-and-a-half years at the Red Cross helm, Evans led the charge to create programs and establish business practices that were inclusive of all populations. She championed the development and implementation of the Red Cross Diversity Business Model and incorporated diversity into the Red Cross five year strategic plan as an organizational priority. To this end, with the input of more than 6,000 Red Crossers, community leaders and other partners and stakeholders, she developed the 2003 Strategic Plan to focus resources on the programs and services communities needed most. Additionally, Evans led the Red Cross in implementing a bold, new initiative, *Together We Prepare*. With five simple steps—make a plan, build a disaster kit, get trained, give blood, volunteer—people in communities prepared themselves, their families, schools, businesses and neighborhoods for the unexpected. She also forged a new, cooperative relationship with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, enabling the Red Cross to move forward with its blood processing modernization strategy and plans.

Today Evans speaks to business and community audiences on leadership and diversity issues. Along with her position on the Board of Directors with the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), she’s director of the Office Depot, U.S. Naval Academy Foundation, Weight Watchers International, the North Highland Company and Huntsman Corporation.

Evans has been honored with numerous awards and accolades throughout her career. She was a 1979-80 White House Fellow. The White House Fellows Association awarded her the 2002 John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award. In 2005, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute honored her with the Four Freedoms Award.

“Marty,” as she is known to friends and colleagues, is from Springfield, Illinois, home of the LPGA State Farm Classic. She graduated from Occidental College in Los Angeles with an AB in Diplomacy and World Affairs. She later earned a Master’s degree in Law and Diplomacy from Tuft’s University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Her degree was supplemented by professional studies at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and the National War College in Washington, DC.

Evans, an avid golfer, lives with her husband, Jerry Evans, in Jacksonville Beach, Florida.

Media contact:

David Higdon, LPGA Chief Communications Officer, +1 386/843-0073, david.higdon@lpga.com