

2023 KEYDET CLUB SPIRIT AWARD PRESENTATION

“Ladies and gentlemen, please direct your attention to center court.

For the past 90 years, the VMI Keydet Club has worked diligently to raise funds in support of VMI’s Division I athletic program and has done so with the unwavering love and generosity of countless members of the VMI family. Today, the Keydet Club is pleased to recognize two of VMI’s most generous and engaged alums with its highest honor. The Keydet Club’s Spirit of VMI Award, which is presented by the Keydet Club Board of Governors, recognizes outstanding service and support to VMI intercollegiate athletics. The Keydet Club is proud to present the award to Mr. William T. “Billy” Hupp Sr., from the Class of 1977, and Mr. Stephen E. “Steve” Hupp Sr., from the Class of 1984.

Billy and Steve matriculated from Richmond, Virginia. Billy earned a B.S. degree in civil engineering from VMI in 1977, where he was a member of the rat basketball team and the rugby team for three years. Steve followed in his brother’s footsteps, earning a B.S. degree in civil engineering in 1984, where he also was a member of the rat basketball team. Both commissioned in the United States Army.

Following their military service and Steve’s three years as an engineer with the State Corporation Commission of Virginia, both went on to serve in the family business, Estes Express Lines, which today is the largest privately held trucking company in North America. They have been instrumental in the growth of the company, employing over 22,000 employees with over 215 active terminals. Billy previously served as the executive vice president and chief operating officer and beginning in January of 2023 was named the vice chairman of the board of directors while retaining the title of corporate executive vice president. Today, Steve serves as the chief financial officer and corporate secretary.

Billy and Steve have been steady and visible in their support for VMI’s cadet-athletes and coaches for over 40 years. Billy served on the Keydet Club Board of Governors from 1991–1997 and currently serves on the Jackson-Hope Board. Steve served on the Board of Trustees for the VMI Foundation from 2006–2021 and served as the President from 2019—2021. Today, Steve is an active member of the Keydet Club Board of Governors and serves on the Executive Committee.

Billy and Steve have been generous leadership members in the Keydet Club in support of its mission. Their benevolence in support of VMI athletics has earned them a spot on the Keydet Club’s wall of honor in Cameron Hall, recognizing million-dollar donors to the Keydet Club.

In 2005, Billy and Steve established the Hupp Family Athletic Scholarship to honor their father, Mr. H. Thomas Hupp Jr., VMI Class of 1944, which today is the fifth largest athletic endowment in the Keydet Club. Billy and Steve remain longstanding annual full out-of-state scholarship leadership members. In 2019, Steve spearheaded an effort to create support for our coaches’ compensation, helping raise over \$2 million to establish an endowment to attract and retain high-caliber coaches who play an integral role in the success and lives of our cadet-athletes.

Billy and Steve’s personal success and their love and admiration for VMI goes back to one person...their father, Thomas Hupp, Class of 1944. The late Mr. Hupp was also a civil engineering major who left after his 2nd Class year to go serve his country in World War II. During that time, Mr. Hupp was a German POW and attributes his survival to what he had learned from his time at VMI. Mr. Hupp eventually came back to VMI to complete his 1st Class year and graduated from the Institute. It was the example he showed by his support and passion for everything about VMI, especially VMI athletics, that continues to motivate Billy and Steve to be a part of something special.

The Hupp Family legacy has continued at VMI. This past fall, Billy welcomed Whit Kern, VMI Class of 2014 to the family as his son-in-law, who married his daughter, Charlotte, who is here with us today. Also in attendance are Billy's son, Will, and his grandson, William, Alex and Sheldon Peebles, and Mackie and Sarah Peebles. Both of Steve's sons graduated from VMI, beginning with Stephen, who is VMI Class of 2016, followed by Thomas, who is VMI Class of 2020. Thomas went on to marry Kiley Cropper Hupp, VMI Class of 2021, a scholarship athlete on the women's soccer team. Steve's daughter, Rebekah, married Donnie Martin, VMI Class of 2013, and today, Rebekah is a professor in the civil engineering department, the same department that her grandfather spent his cadetship in over 80 years ago.

Joining Billy and Steve at center court are:

VMI Athletic Director: Jim Miller

VMI Superintendent: Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85

Billy's wife: Diana

Steve's wife: Renee

Keydet Club President: Danny Thornton '78

Keydet Club Chief Operating Officer: Andrew Deal '12

Ladies and Gentlemen – Here is Danny Thornton, who will make the presentation of the Keydet Club's Spirit of VMI Award."

"Billy and Steve—You are most deserving of this award, and on behalf of the Keydet Club Board of Governors, the entire VMI family, and especially the countless cadet-athletes who have been the direct beneficiaries of your generosity, I thank you and am proud to present you with the Keydet Club's highest honor, the Spirit of VMI Award."