

Biography for Sherman Gillums Jr.

Sherman Gillums Jr., a native of Buffalo, New York, began his military career in the U.S. Marine Corps a month after his high school graduation. During his 12-year military career, he was meritoriously promoted to the rank of staff sergeant in 1999, appointed to the rank of warrant officer in 2000, and commissioned a chief warrant officer in 2001. He was honorably discharged in 2002 following severe injury, after which he went on to pursue a new career in veteran advocacy. His military decorations include two Navy/Marine Commendation Medals, Navy/Marine Achievement Medal, Marine Drill Instructor ribbon, and Global War on Terror Service Medal.

In 2004, Gillums joined Paralyzed Veterans of America as a VA benefits claims expert in San Diego, where he assisted veterans, families, and survivors with fighting for their entitlements. He later became involved with the local Paralyzed Veterans chapter and went on to become the chapter's president and a member of the National Paralyzed Veterans Field Advisory Committee. He had worked as an appellate representative at the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, DC, before accepting the position of associate executive director of veterans benefits in 2011, deputy executive director in 2014, and executive director in January 2016. While serving as executive director, he influenced critical policy changes on Capitol Hill, raised the organization's public profile, and successfully championed an organizational culture of innovation and excellence. Today, he serves as Vice Chairman on the Federal Advisory Committee for Veterans' Family, Caregiver, and Survivor and Consumer Reviewer for the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program.

A well respected commentator with an ability to "move the needle" on veterans issues, Sherman has written opinion editorials for the NY Times, The Hill, and Buffalo News publications, and he has been regularly quoted in Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and Military Times. He has testified before Congress as an expert witness on veterans benefits and has appeared on CNN, Fox, CBS News, and C-SPAN. He was named a "Mover and Shaker" in the Power 300 Spring 2016 issue of *Savoy* magazine and recognized one of HillVets 100 most influential people in veteran advocacy in 2016.

Sherman is a graduate of University of San Diego's School of Business Administration and completed his executive education at Harvard Business School.