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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Utah National Guard's Honorary Colonels Corps Hosts 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner**

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah National Guard will host its 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Minuteman Awards Dinner Wednesday, June 10, at Salt Lake's Grand America Hotel at 7:30 p.m.

The Honorary Colonels Corps of Utah will sponsor the event. The Corps is an organization of community leaders who promote goodwill and positive relations between the National Guard and local Utah communities. Members provide annual support for Utah Army and Air National Guard activities such as the Freedom Academy and Veterans Day concert.

Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Brian Tarbet and Honorary Colonels Corps Commander, retired Brig. Gen. E.J. "Jake" Garn, will present Bronze Minuteman awards to Michael Ballam, Terry Ogborn, Kim Robinson, Jill Stevens, Paul Swenson and Robert Voyles for their individual devoted service to and leadership among the citizens of Utah.

Ballam's operatic and recital career spans four decades. He has performed in the major concert halls of America, Europe, Asia, Russia and the Middle East, with command performances at the Vatican and the White House. He has shared the stage with many of the world's greatest singers. His operatic repertoire includes more than 600 performances of more than 70 major roles. He is a professor of music at Utah State University and an accomplished pianist and oboist. He has starred in three major motion pictures while making regular appearances on television, and he serves on the boards of directors of 12 professional-arts organizations.

Ogborn, an educator, has been an advocate for at-risk students for over 25 years. She is well known in Utah for going to great lengths to provide students with the support needed to obtain an education. She was on the original committee which developed the guidelines for Millcreek High School, an alternative school in Washington County. She was appointed as its principal when it opened in 1986 and has been influential in Millcreek's receiving attention and recognition throughout the state for its progressive approach to education.

Robinson is president of Robinson Transport, Inc., in Salina, Utah. His company provides \$1,000 a month to its Citizen-Soldier employees who serve their country in deployments around the world. In addition to his service to military members and their families, Robinson sponsors community, school and civic events of all kinds. In 2008 he was awarded the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest honor given to an employer by the U.S. Government for service and contributions to members of the National Guard and Reserve. He currently serves as president of the Utah Trucking Association.

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Stevens served her country as a combat medic in the Utah National Guard. In 2003-2005, she was deployed to Afghanistan, earning five medals for her outstanding service, and was the first female to complete the inaugural Afghanistan Marathon. She has completed a total of 14 marathons and also earned the highest fitness award during Army Basic Training. She was chosen as one of four women for the "Women of Strength" feature in Muscle and Fitness Hers Magazine, September/October 2007 issue. In 2007, she was crowned Miss Utah and later competed in the Miss America pageant in 2008, where she was named "America's Choice" as one of 16 finalists.

Swenson and his wife Elizabeth have owned and operated Colonial Flag for 25 years. He is responsible for the creation of the Healing Field, a field of flags to honor those who lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks along with the Soldiers who died fighting the War on Terrorism. He was the 2004 recipient of the George Washington Medal of Honor awarded by the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge for his contribution to encourage patriotism. Swenson is a devoted supporter of our military men and women. Several U.S. flags supplied by Colonial Flag are flying proudly today in Iraq and elsewhere overseas because of Swenson's efforts.

General Robert Voyles retired from the Utah National Guard in 1997 after 34 years of service. He was then appointed as director of the Fort Douglas Military Museum. In 2000, he was assigned by Governor Leavitt to command the Utah State Defense Force and promoted to brigadier general. Voyles, with the support of National Guard Bureau, he organized a Museum Advisory Council that provides information on Guard museums nationwide and assists the Bureau in developing policy and support for them. Voyles is very active in the museum community and currently serves as president of both the Utah Museums Association and the Foothill Cultural District.

**Media Notes:** Salt Lake's Grand America Hotel is located at 555 S. Main. Media are welcome to cover the black-tie event. There will be a receiving line for dignitaries at 6:30 p.m. prior to the dinner. For more information, please contact Lt. Col. Hank McIntire at (801) 420-4778.