

## **Bill Center**

Bill Center retired from the U.S. Navy as Rear Admiral in 1999 after 35 years service and not long afterwards assumed leadership of a Seattle-based trade advocacy group where he worked for the next seven years. He now lectures and serves as a senior advisor for international fellows programs at the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs. He believes it is possible to eliminate extreme global poverty and he says he has no plans to fully retire until that goal is reached.

A specialist in policy analysis, strategic planning and organization development, Center served as a senior advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on arms control, non-proliferation, environmental matters, and international agreements. He was General Colin Powell's deputy director for international negotiations and served in the same role for General John Shalikashvili. In his final assignment, from May 1996 to May 1999, he commanded the Navy's third largest fleet concentration area, Navy Region Northwest.

Bill is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the Evans School. During his naval career he commanded three ships and served in a wide variety of assignments at sea and ashore, including three years as chief engineer on the aircraft carrier USS Midway. Along with his wife and two sons, he lived in Japan during three different assignments totaling eight years.

Upon retiring from the Navy, Center devoted himself to nonprofit leadership, education and volunteer work. He served until 2007 as president of the Washington Council on International Trade, a nonprofit, non-partisan association that advocates for good trade policy and promotes understanding of the role and importance of trade. He is a leader in the Rotary Club of Seattle and the Initiative for Global Development. A sought-after public speaker, he has also taught various courses on leadership, economics and the graduate seminar on U.S. Foreign Policy at the Evans School.

Raised in Los Angeles, Bill and Karla, his wife of 43 years, reside in Edmonds. He enjoys spending time with their twin granddaughters, music, cooking, woodworking, landscape design and sports.

## **M. Staser Holcomb**

Staser Holcomb grew up in Seattle. He graduated from Roosevelt High School, and attended the US Naval Academy.

He served in uniform for 36 years, retiring as a vice admiral in 1985.

A carrier pilot, he flew from 18 different aircraft carriers. He commanded a carrier squadron, served as XO of *Saratoga* (CV-60), and then commanded *Guam* (LPH-9), Carrier Group ONE, and the US SEVENTH Fleet.

In several Pentagon tours--working in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the staff of the Secretary of the Navy, and the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations--he became expert in

Defense Planning, Programming and Budgeting. He served as Senior Military Assistant to two Secretaries of Defense.

After retiring from the Navy, he became a senior executive at USAA—the insurance and financial services provider for military families headquartered in San Antonio, TX.

Staser and his wife, Joanne, moved to Edmonds in 1997, happy to be back in the Northwest after 42 years. He has been active in the Rotary Club, in church work, and in many other volunteer activities.

Between 2001 and 2006, he spent about half of his time in Washington, DC, where he assisted the Secretary of Defense in transforming the process used for promoting and assigning senior military officers . . . as special assistant for succession planning.

He and Joanne have five children (three of whom became naval officers) and ten grandchildren.

### **Michael Ramos**

Michael Ramos currently serves as the Executive Director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, a 92-year old organization of faith communities committed to social justice and equity, seeking to build the Beloved Community espoused by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A native of New York City, Michael came to the Pacific Northwest 28 years ago to further his vocation to of linking spirituality and social justice. This led him from anti-nuclear work to addressing basic needs of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees to active involvement in the Sanctuary Movement including the co-leading of St. Patrick's Church becoming a sanctuary congregation. While developing a model of base community organizing in Oakland, he was one of the founding members of the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, a statewide organization in California founded to confront the anti-immigrant sentiment of Proposition 187. He subsequently coordinated the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride in Seattle in 2003, an immigrant-driven national bus trip that advocated for the principles of Comprehensive Immigration Reform. He co-founded the Washington New Sanctuary Movement to support immigrant families at risk of deportation in 2007.

He has worked across church and faith lines for his entire career including with the Washington Association of Churches as living wage organizer and tax fairness educator, developing the Walk with Workers program to bring the stories of workers to galvanize the solidarity of the faith community. At the Church Council of Greater Seattle, through services and advocacy, he has been a leader in faith efforts to address homelessness and defend the partnership of faith communities and Tent Cities.

He holds a Master of Divinity from Seattle University and is married with two teenage daughters.

**Eric Schinfeld**

Eric Schinfeld is the President of the Washington Council on International Trade (WCIT), which is dedicated to growing our state's economy through public policies favorable to expanded opportunities in the global marketplace. WCIT's members are farmers, manufacturers, service providers, non-profit organizations and individuals who support strong trade policy that benefits Washington's small, medium and large companies and creates jobs for Washington residents. Eric also serves as the Federal Policy Director for the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Prior to these roles, Eric spent five years as staff to the Prosperity Partnership – a coalition of business, government and community organizations focused on ensuring long-term prosperity for the Puget Sound region – and he began his career in the Washington, DC office of U.S. Congressman Rick Boucher. Eric has a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.P.A. from the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Affairs.

**Peter Schmidt, Psy. D.**

Peter Schmidt is Project Director and trainer for the Veterans Training Support Center of the Center for Learning Connections at Edmonds Community College. The Center provides outreach and consultation to colleges, universities, and community based agencies in Washington State as well as nationally. A veteran of the United States Air Force and Washington Air National Guard, Peter offers numerous trainings on veteran's issues in higher education, veteran best practices, invisible wounds such as post-traumatic stress disorder and mild-traumatic brain injury.

Dr. Schmidt offers diagnosis and treatment to veterans and their families as a counseling subcontractor for the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs. He helped to develop a restorative retelling support group for inmates (military veterans) at McNeil Island Corrections Center. Peter is a counselor, psychology faculty member, and dean at Edmonds Community College, and served as chair of the Veterans Resource Team and adviser to Club Vet (student veteran association).

Peter holds an M.A. in Counseling from Seattle University and M.A. and Psy. D. in Clinical Psychology from Argosy University in Seattle. He is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and National Certified Counselor.