



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Ayoka Blandford
(202) 777-8933**

Two Foundations Join Forces for Women Veterans
National Summit Will Address the Unique Needs of Women Veterans

Washington, DC, May 27, 2010 -- Every day, women in the military are willing to lay down their lives for our country. But when they return home, they often are misunderstood, underutilized and sometimes forgotten. Research reveals that, as a nation, we somehow are missing the mark when it comes to supporting women veterans during a difficult and challenging transition in their lives.

With support from McCormick Foundation, Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation will host *Joining Forces for Women Veterans*, a national Summit to raise awareness, create an action plan and launch a fund to help support solutions for women veterans who are challenged in their transition to civilian career, family, and community lives. The Summit will build on existing research as well as best practices of successful programs and policies.

"Just as women serving in the military have faced unique challenges, the same is true for returning women veterans," said David D. Hiller, president and CEO of the McCormick Foundation. "We are proud to join the Business and Professional Women's Foundation in this effort, giving back to women veterans who have given so much for all of us."

"BPW Foundation's premise, as supported by our research, is that women veterans are unique and should be considered separately," says Roslyn Ridgeway, chair of the BPW Foundation Board of Trustees. "The impact of military service on these women as workers, spouses and family caretakers cannot and should not be underestimated."

The Summit will be held in fall 2010 in Washington, DC. It is scheduled as a full day meeting with approximately 40 to 50 participants, including women veterans, government, community and corporate representatives. The topic areas are employment and careers; family and community re-integration; and homelessness. Public policy will be integrated throughout the program. As a result of the Summit, an ongoing fund will be established to support programs and services for women veterans.

"During the past 10 years, we have learned that their scope of responsibility in the service, along with the skills and talents that make these women great soldiers, has strengthened their value as employees and leaders," says BPW Foundation CEO, Deborah Frett.

“However, the transition back to civilian life can be difficult and involves challenges that are unique to them as women,” Frett continued.

In addition to assistance from McCormick Foundation, BPW Foundation also will leverage its support base which includes Congressional committee members, Administration officials, coalition partners and key agency officials.

BPW Foundation believes in the power of a united stakeholder voice to recognize and create the systems and programs that focus on women veteran’s success. This Summit is the launch of a multi-year initiative leverage public and private support to implement solutions.

Today there are more than 1.8 million women veterans in the United States and that number is growing exponentially. These ‘sheroes’ are four times as likely as non-veteran women to be homeless, suffer a more than 7.1 percent rate of unemployment and a divorce rate that is sometimes higher than the national average and leave these women with primary responsibility for caring for children.

“These women return to lead roles within their families, communities and the U.S. workforce. BPW Foundation believes it is our duty to support them,” Ridgeway added.

BPW Foundation is seeking public and private partners to supplement the McCormick Foundation investment and help launch this initiative. To get involved, contact BPW Foundation at womenvetsummit@bpwfoundation.org

Business and Professional Women’s (BPW) Foundation partners to create successful workplaces that practice and embrace diversity, equity and work-life balance. BPW Foundation is a 501(c)(3) research and education organization. Through our groundbreaking research and unique role as a convener of employers and employees, BPW Foundation leads the way in developing and advocating for policies and programs that “work” for both women and businesses. www.bpwfoundation.org

The McCormick Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to strengthening our free, democratic society by investing in our children, communities and country. It was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Col. Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune, who believed that philanthropy and service to others strengthens the civic health of our communities. The Foundation is one of the nation’s largest charities, with more than \$1 billion in assets. To learn more about the McCormick Foundation visit www.McCormickFoundation.org.