



MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: Tyler Lecceadone
616-776-3511
Lecceadone@seyferthpr.com

**FREE COMMUNITY EVENT SCHEDULED TO CELEBRATE THE COMMISSIONING
OF THE USS GERALD R. FORD AIRCRAFT CARRIER ON JULY 22**

*Retired commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet to speak
during Grand Rapids commissioning activities*

On Saturday, July 22, the nation will celebrate the commissioning of its newest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford. The public is invited to join in the celebration of the historic commissioning during a free community event at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, which includes a presentation by Patrick Walsh, a retired U.S. Navy four-star admiral who last served as commander of the Pacific Fleet.

“We’re excited for this opportunity to share the commissioning ceremony with the Grand Rapids community,” said Joe Calvaruso, Gerald R. Ford Foundation executive director. “We are thankful for the community’s continued support honoring President Ford’s legacy.”

The family-friendly event will begin at 9:30 a.m. and feature both indoor and outdoor activities, live music and Walsh’s presentation. At 10 a.m., the commissioning ceremony, live from Virginia, will be displayed outside and inside the Museum. The commissioning celebration will happen rain or shine on July 22 from 9:30 a.m. until noon.

Before serving as the 59th Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet from September 25, 2009 to January 20, 2012, Walsh served as the 35th vice chief of Naval Operations and as commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and commander, U.S. 5th Fleet. He retired from the Navy with over 34 years of service.

Activities, sponsored by Spartan Nash, include:

- an American Red Cross blood drive on site (10 a.m.–3p.m.),
- toy boat races in the Museum’s fountain,
- letter writing to seaman aboard the U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford,
- performances by the Salvation Army Brass Band,
- games and activities to be led by individuals from the Salvation Army Kroc Corps Community Center,
- refreshments including a giant cupcake flag.

The USS Gerald R. Ford is the first of the Navy’s new Ford class of aircraft carrier. It can carry more planes and operate with nearly a thousand fewer sailors. It will also increase flying

missions by a third. The ship will go through workups at sea before becoming operational in 2020. The commissioning ceremony will be held at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia.

WHEN: Saturday, July 22 from 9:30 a.m. to noon

WHERE: **Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum**
303 Pearl St. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

###

About the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation

The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation fosters increased awareness of the life, career, values, and legacy of America's 38th President. It does so through activities designed to promote the high ideals of integrity, honesty, and candor that defined President Ford's extraordinary career of public service. The Foundation promotes the ideas, values, commitment to public service and historical legacy of President Gerald R. Ford and further promotes greater civic engagement and recognition of integrity wherever it exists in the public arena. It supports permanent and changing exhibits designed to promote historical literacy; conferences; educational outreach and other programs, both scholarly and popular, including at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum.