

THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

2013 Alumni Career Award

Presented to:

Admiral Gregory Johnson '68, '09 Hon. L.H.D.

The Alumni Career Award is the most prestigious recognition given by the University of Maine Alumni Association. It is presented annually to a University of Maine graduate whose life's work is marked by outstanding achievement and dedication.

This year's Alumni Career Award recipient, Admiral Gregory "Grog" Johnson Class of 1968, had a distinguished 35-year military career eventually rising to the highest rank in the United States Navy. In doing so, he became the only University of Maine graduate to ever achieve a four-star rank.

This outstanding alumnus grew up in the tiny Aroostook County town of Westmanland and attended Caribou High School. When he was ready to consider college, he applied to just one school, the University of Maine. At the University, Grog was active in Sigma Chi Fraternity, eventually serving as Treasurer and Vice President.

After graduation, he was accepted to Navy Aviation Officer Candidate School. His first deployment was flying jets from an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean. After distinguishing himself in that assignment, he had the opportunity to attend the Command and Staff Course at the Naval War College, where he graduated with highest distinction.

His first command position was as a leader of an air wing aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*. Returning to shore duty, Grog served in a series of policy-related positions. The first was as Current Liaison for the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Desert Storm and Desert Shield. He later became Executive Assistant to General Colin Powell.

After being promoted to Admiral rank in 1995, Grog was assigned as Director of Operations, Plans, Policy on the *Commander in Chief*, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. He then became Commander of an entire battle group (Carrier Group Eight). In 1997 he returned to Washington as Senior Military Assistant to Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. John Hamre. In 1999 he became Senior Military Advisor to Secretary of Defense William Cohen.

In 2000 Grog assumed command of the Navy's Sixth Fleet at a time when our country was deeply involved in the Balkans. It was also the time of the *Cole* incident, which fostered major changes in how the Navy protects ships and does port calls.

After receiving his fourth star in 2001, Grog was chosen to command U.S. Naval Forces,

Europe and Commander in Chief Allied Forces, Southern Europe. In his NATO role, he oversaw 50,000 peacekeepers in the Balkans. In his U.S. post, he was heavily involved in support operations for Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Grog retired from active duty in 2004. During his outstanding career, he received numerous distinctions and honors including: the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with two Gold Stars), the NATO Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, and the Navy Achievement Medal. He received awards for his service from Bulgaria, France, Hungary, and Italy and was honored with the Naval War College's Distinguished Graduate Leadership Award. In 2009, Grog was presented with an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, the University of Maine. He has served as a member of the University of Maine Board of Trustees.

The Alumni Association is extremely proud to present the 2013 Alumni Career Award to an alumnus who served his country with distinction at the highest level, Admiral Gregory "Grog" Johnson.

Presented June 1, 2013, by the University of Maine Alumni Association

Samantha Lott Hale '02, Chair