

## **Two May holidays recognize moms and military**

Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler

MALCOLM J. McPHERSON JR

I've written a lot over the past several months about my theme for the year of "Strengthening Elkdom Through Community Awareness" and the many ways Elks can support it. May is a particularly special month: Not only is spring finally here, but it also brings some important moments for us to celebrate mothers and the military in our communities with Mother's Day and Memorial Day. There's no better way to strengthen Elkdom than by focusing on causes meaningful to the Order.

As Mother's Day approaches on May 13, think about the ways you can honor the mothers and grandmothers in your personal life and Lodge life. Host a breakfast or lunch so they don't have to cook or set up a donation drive for those who may be struggling to support their families. These small acts will make a big difference. They allow you to recognize the women who make lasting contributions to your Lodge while also doing the most important job of all.

While Memorial Day for many is associated with barbecues, beaches, and the unofficial start of summer, the true meaning of the holiday—honoring our fallen soldiers—often goes unnoticed. The last Monday of May is a much more significant holiday for Elks as strong supporters of our armed and uniformed forces and veterans. I urge you to take a break from your summer fun to participate in Memorial Day activities in your communities, such as parades and memorial services, as well as host your own rituals to remember our soldiers and other uniformed officers.

The holiday is also a great time to reach out to our veterans, since as Elks we believe that "So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them." While Elks support veterans with programs and outreach throughout the year, think about how you can help at your local VA this May or invite them to your Lodge for a dinner or Memorial Day service.

I look forward to celebrating these May occasions with you. I will see you out there!