



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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Illinois Treasurer Frerichs Returns Purple Heart To Family of Vietnam Veteran

Forgotten Medal Makes Its Way Home in Time for Veteran's Day

EAST ST. LOUIS – Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs today returned a Purple Heart Medal to Tommie Turner, brother-in-law of late Vietnam War Veteran, Willie G. Riley, at a ceremony at East St. Louis City Hall.

The Purple Heart is one of the most recognized and respected medals awarded to a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. Frerichs also returned military transfer papers, a savings bond, and jewelry that belonged to Turner and his late wife. The items were discovered in a safe deposit box that was surrendered to the treasurer's office as unclaimed property.

“As Veteran's Day approaches, returning this Purple Heart is an incredible way to honor Willie G. Riley and his family for his service and sacrifice to this country,” Frerichs said. “We could not be prouder to have played a role in this reunion.”

Riley served in the United States Army from 1967-1969 and earned a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam. Upon receiving the medal, Riley requested that his sister, the late wife of Tommie Turner, place the Purple Heart in her safe deposit box. The contents were surrendered to the treasurer's office as unclaimed property after Riley's sister passed away. Turner plans to give the Purple Heart Medal to Mr. Riley's widow, who lives in New York.

The treasurer's office has more than 100 unclaimed military medals. Military medals are never auctioned and are kept until the owners or family members are found.

The treasurer's office is the custodian of unclaimed property, including lost bank accounts, insurance policy proceeds, and forgotten safe deposit boxes. Items are surrendered after private entities tried for at least five years to locate the owners. Because thousands of items are surrendered each year, residents should check I-Cash every six months. Visit www.illinoistreasurer.gov/ICASH for more information. **Frerichs' office never charges money to search for unclaimed property.**

About the Illinois Treasurer

The Illinois Treasurer is the state's chief investment officer and Frerichs is a Certified Public Finance Officer. He protects consumers by encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. As the state's Chief Investment Officer, he actively manages approximately \$25 billion. The portfolio includes \$13 billion in state funds, \$7 billion in college savings plans and \$5 billion on behalf of local and state governments. The investment approach is cautious to ensure the preservation of capital and returns \$28 to the state for every \$1 spent in operations. The Treasurer's Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

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