



American GI Forum – Mile High Chapter

MEMBER HANDBOOK

**AGIF Mile High Chapter
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“Education is our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody’s Business”

Dr. Hector P. Garcia, Founder

***Compiled by:
2013 Membership Committee***

1/1/14



Welcome AGIF Forumeer!

On behalf of the American GI Forum of the United States, and the **Mile High Chapter**, we want to welcome you to the only Congressionally Chartered Hispanic Veteran and Family Organization in the United States. The Mile High Chapter was organized and chartered as an affiliate member in 1965.

For more than 60 years, the American GI Forum has been at the forefront of social issues that affect the Hispanic community, including, but not limited to: education, voting rights, employment and educational discrimination, veteran issues, and the plight of the undocumented.

Currently, there are chapters in almost every state of the union that continue the work started by our founder, Dr. Hector P. Garcia. The AGIF-Mile High Chapter, through the commitment of volunteers, provides financial assistance to community projects, needy students, and other special programs, at the local, state and national levels.

You as a Member are a vital link to the success of the Forum. By becoming a member, you have expressed your desire to support our veterans, their families, and the community at large.

Your membership entitles you to voice your opinions on all issues affecting our future growth. In addition, your membership entitles you to become involved in the actual operations of the Forum. We operate on a volunteer committee system, and presently have the following standing and special committees: Women, Youth, Veteran Affairs, Education, Communications, Membership, and the Mile High Players.

As a member, you and your family are entitled to participate in the various functions and events that are presented throughout the year.

As a new member or current member, we encourage you to become an active part of this chapter. This handbook will assist you as a member of the Mile High Chapter.

Sincerely,

Mile Hi Chapter
Commander and Executive Board

1/1/14

Table of Contents

	Page
Part I - Overview	
History of the AGIF	1
Motto	1
Prayer	1
Preamble Statement	2
Purpose	2
Part II - Organizational Structure	
Executive Board	2
Chapter Committees	4
Board of Trustees	4
Code of Conduct	5
Oath of Membership & Officers	5
Sign In Procedures	6
Club Rules	6
Member Benefits	6
Entertainment	6
Funeral Service – Honor Guard	7
Hall Rental or Use	7
Authority	7
Organizational Chart	8

PART I - OVERVIEW

History of the American GI Forum (AGIF)

Dr. Hector P. Garcia founded the American GI Forum of the United States on March 26, 1948, in Corpus Christi, Texas. Dr. Garcia was an army veteran medical doctor who, upon returning to Texas after World War II with 6 battle stars, found that while Mexican American veterans had been changed by the war, prejudiced America had not. The AGIF was formed to address the inequities endured by Hispanic veterans and their families, and soon became active in civil rights, educational attainment, and equity in employment, income, and health services for all Hispanics.

For a more in-depth history, please visit:

<http://www.justiceformypeople.org/drhector.html>

The AGIF's first campaign was on behalf of Felix Longoria, a Mexican-American private who was killed in the Philippines in the line of duty. Upon the return of his body to Texas, he was denied funeral services by a White American-owned funeral home. Dr. Garcia requested the intercession of then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, who secured Longoria's burial in Arlington National Cemetery. The case brought the AGIF to national attention, and chapters were established throughout the country.

<http://www.utmb.edu/drgarcia/longoria.html>

AGIF currently operates chapters throughout the United States with a focus on veteran issues, education, and civil rights.

Motto

The motto of this organization is "Education is Our Freedom and Freedom Should Be Everybody's Business."

Prayer

The official prayer of this organization is the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. This Prayer is recited at the beginning and at the end of all general membership meetings.

LORD,
Make me an instrument of Thy Peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.
Oh, DIVINE MASTER, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved, as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

1/1/14

Preamble Statement

We, the various State GI Forum Chapters, GI Forum Women, GI Forum Youth and At-Large Chapters of the American GI Forum, a Congressionally Chartered Veterans Family Organization, in order to better serve our People, our Country, our State, and our local Communities, do hereby commit ourselves to the principles of American constitutional democracy, to the advocacy of U.S. military service Veterans' rights, education, civil rights, and socio-economical equal opportunity by organizing and establishing a National Organization of the American GI Forum.

Purpose

The basic purpose of this organization is to secure the blessings of American democracy at every level of life, local, state, and national, for all inhabitants of our Country, as well as to further the rights of all Veterans, of all our members, their families and friends. This organization, its officers, and members, therefore pledge to:

- 1) Uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and the American Flag.
- 2) Foster and perpetuate the principles of American democracy based on religious and political freedom for the individual and equal opportunity for all.
- 3) Foster and enlarge equal educational opportunities, equal economic opportunities, equal justice under the law and equal political opportunities for all citizens, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or sexual orientation.

PART II - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Executive Board

Composition

Executive Board consists of at least a Commander, Vice-Commander, Chairwoman, Vice-Chairwoman, Secretary and Treasurer. Other officers may be elected or appointed according to the provisions of the Chapter By-Laws.

Role

The Executive Board of this Chapter has the authority to make recommendations to the members on matters of Forum policy and the operation of the organization. It protects all interests of the members by enforcing the National and State Constitutions and the By-Laws of this Chapter. Between meetings, the Executive Board has the power to direct the affairs of the Chapter. In the event that no quorum is present at any regular meeting and/or matters of great importance arise between meetings, the Executive Board acts in the best interest of the membership and such action is binding. The Executive Board provides an accounting of all general and financial matters to the general membership on a monthly basis.

Duties

1) Commander

Commander must be a veteran. He/she is the presiding officer at all regular meetings, and is a member of the State Board of Directors. He/she signs all official proclamations and declarations made in the name of the Chapter, unless he/she expressly authorizes another officer to do so. He/she is the official representative at all social, civic, and other functions wherein the Chapter is asked to participate. He/she makes all appointments, and exercises such other duties and functions as normally fall within the scope of his/her office as specified in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

2) Vice Commander

The Vice Commander must be a veteran. The Vice Commander performs the duties of the Commander in his/her absence, and is an ex officio member of all committees.

3) Secretary

All general matters and correspondence are handled from this office and supervised by the Commander. The Secretary keeps a permanent record of the meetings and transactions of the Chapter. The Secretary handles correspondence and performs all duties usually and customarily pertaining to the office of Secretary. He/she keeps a current record of all mailing addresses. He/she maintains a record of member attendance at all regular and special meetings. The Secretary serves as a member of the Membership Committee.

4) Treasurer

The Treasurer keeps a current account of all income and disbursements of the Chapter funds. He/she works with the Secretary and Chairperson of the Membership Committee in keeping a current membership account. He/she is responsible for the annual review of the Chapter funds. He/she provides a revenue and expense report, in writing, at the monthly membership meeting. The Treasurer serves as a member of the Membership Committee.

5) Sergeant At Arms

The Sergeant at Arms is responsible for the enforcement of conduct at all general membership and special meetings of this Chapter. Further, he/she is responsible for the introduction of all guests and the preservation of order at meetings.

6) Chaplain

The Chaplain renders the official prayer and invocation at the meetings.

7) Historian

The Historian keeps a record of all the activities of the Chapter and, to the best of his/her ability, keeps an up-to-date history of the Chapter using pictures, newspaper clippings, etc.

8) Chairwoman and Vice-Chairwoman

The duties of these officers are identical to those described herein for the Commander and Vice-Commander.

1/1/14

Chapter Committees

The Commander creates standing and special committees, as needed. He/she appoints the chairperson of all committees.

Standing Committees

Committees such as the Veteran Affairs, Education, Communications, and Membership, focus on the general mission and operation of the organization. Furthermore, these committees adhere to the Chapter goals and their annual individual committee goals and objectives.

Veteran Affairs Committee

- Provides outreach activities to Veterans and their families.
- Expresses tribute and honor to our fallen member soldiers.
- Advocates for the rights and benefits of military service veterans and their families.

Education Committee

- Fosters and maintains a scholarship program to assist students in need of financial assistance to pursue a higher education. Priority is given to veterans.

Communications Committee

- Provides communications to members about club activities.
- Develops and distributes a newsletter to members.

Membership Committee

- Encourages the recruitment of new members to the organization.
- Communicates with the Chapter members.
- Creates and maintains the membership criteria and process.
- Plans and conducts the annual Member/Volunteer Appreciation event.

Special Committees

Special committees are established to address a specific issue or need of the Chapter, e.g., By-Laws Review, Special Events, etc. These special committees have a defined timeline to address and complete purpose.

Board of Trustees (BOT)

The Board of Trustees is comprised of 7 members, 5 of which are elected by the Mile High Chapter membership present at the December membership meeting. The other two members are the elected Commander and Chairwoman of the Executive Board.

The BOT is responsible for the management of the hall/lounge and external grounds/property of the Mile High Chapter. They have the authority to establish operating procedures and to select personnel to manage and operate the building. The Trustees are also responsible for addressing any chapter issues or grievances related to the management of hall/lounge, and are responsible for keeping the membership informed of major policy changes.

1/1/14

Trustees are elected for a 3-year term and may not serve more than 2 consecutive terms. A candidate for a Trustee position must have been a member in good standing of the Mile High Chapter for 3 years (36 consecutive months) prior to the date of any election to the BOT. The BOT makes selections to the following positions at the beginning of each year, and any person elected is expected to perform in one or more of these areas:

- Chairperson. The presiding officer and representative to the membership.
- Vice-Chairperson. Performs the duties of this office as specified in Robert's Rules of Order.
- Secretary. Keeps a permanent record of all meetings and transactions of the BOT, and performs any other duties deemed necessary by the BOT.
- Treasurer. Keeps a current account of all revenue and expenses of the building funds, provides a report at the monthly membership meeting, and performs all duties expected of this office as outlined in the Chapter By-Laws.

Additional positions include:

- Operations Manager
- Building Maintenance Manager
- Bar Operations Manager
- Any other positions deemed necessary by the BOT.

Code of Conduct for Members

The American GI Forum Mile High Chapter Code of Conduct is a foundation of our personal commitment to uphold the oath taken by members, and the oath of elected and appointed officers of the Chapter. This code of conduct applies to members, elected and appointed officers, and appointed committee chairs.

Failure to comply with the oath will result in corrective action, including but not limited to, suspension of membership and/or expulsion from the chapter.

Oath of Membership

"I do solemnly promise and swear that I will uphold the Constitution and the Flag of the United States and of my State, that I will abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of the American GI Forum and the Mile High Chapter, and that I will neither wrong nor harm, in any way shape or form, the same nor a member thereof, so help me God."

Oath of Officers

"I do solemnly promise and swear that I will uphold the Constitution and the Flag of the United States and of my State, and I will abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of the American GI Forum of which I am (position held); that my conduct and thoughts shall always be for the betterment and advancement of said organization, that I will serve to the best of my ability, and will strive for cooperation with all officers and committees of said organization, and that I will adhere always to this end and uphold the same to the utmost, so help me God."

1/1/14

Sign In Procedures

Non-members are required to sign in when entering the hall. The sign-in sheet requires the name of the member's sponsor, who must be a member in good standing and be present during the guest's entire stay.

Club Rules

1. Member must have a current membership card or key card to use club services.
2. Member is responsible for the conduct of his/her guests. **Guest must be in the company of a Mile High Chapter sponsor to remain in the club.**
3. A valid current membership card must be shown to the Bartender or Trustee upon request.
4.
 - a. Members and guests must refrain from using loud, boisterous or profane language. Violators will be asked to leave the club and may be suspended for a minimum of 48 hours.
 - b. A member may be suspended for a minimum of 30 days if he/she is asked to leave the club for a second time.
 - c. A member must appear before the Board of Trustees for the reinstatement of club privileges if he/she is asked to leave the club a third time.
 - d. A member may appeal any decision to the Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting.
5. Minors (under 21 years of age) are not allowed without a parent or guardian. Minors between 10 and 20 years of age must leave the club by 10:00 p.m. Minors 9 years of age and under must leave the club by 8:30 p.m.
6. The Bartender has the right to refuse service to any member or guest who is intoxicated.
7. The decision of the Bartender on duty is final. The Bartender on duty and Board of Trustee members have full authority to enforce club rules.

Member Benefits

Private Club

The American GI Forum is a private club with dues-paying members. The private club status affords our members a safe friendly environment to conduct business activities and to socialize. Guests are welcome but must be accompanied by a paid sponsoring member in good standing. In accordance with the State Liquor Code, you must be a member of this organization, or a guest of a member or the club (special events), in order to be served alcohol at the Club or at a special event. Guests may not remain in the club without a paid sponsoring member. Members are responsible for the conduct of their guest(s). Members and guests must refrain from using loud, boisterous, or profane language. Guests are encouraged to become members after three (3) visits. Valid membership cards are to be shown to the bartender or an authorized Executive Board member or Board of Trustee member upon request.

Entertainment

Please view our website for latest information about entertainment.

<http://agifmilehigh.org/calendar.html>

1/1/14

Funeral Service – Honor Guard

The Honor Guard is available on a limited basis to provide funeral services with a reasonable and timely request. Contact the Chairperson of the Veteran Affairs Committee for more information.

Hall Rental or Use

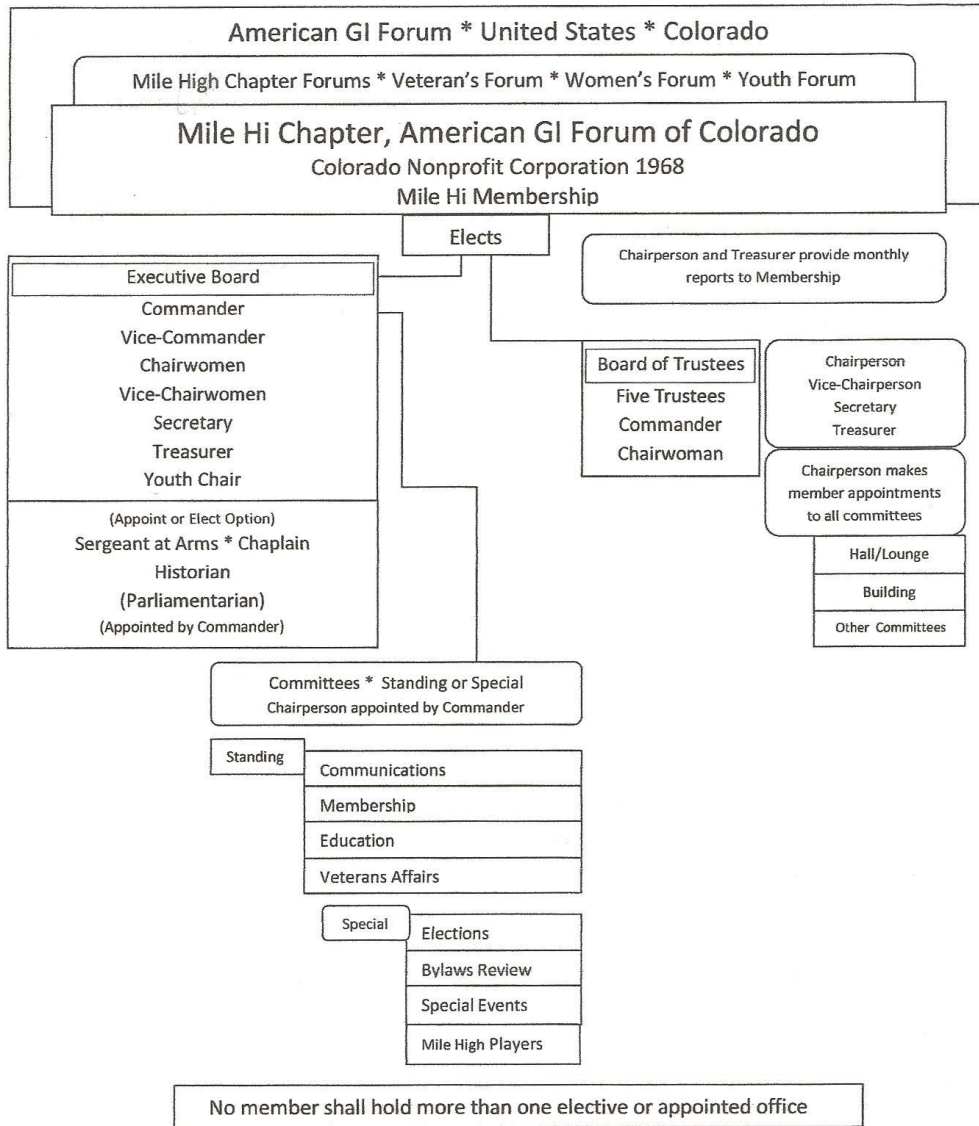
The American GI Forum Mile High Chapter hall is available for rent. Members in good standing, and who have been members for at least six (6) months, will be eligible to receive the member rental rate as determined by the Board of Trustees. A hall rental agreement must be signed, and at the time of signing, the required deposit must be paid. Rental of hall does not include the bar area. A member sponsoring a non-member renter must sign the rental agreement and will be bound by all rules of the rental agreement. This member must be present throughout the sponsored event. (See Bar Manager or Board of Trustee member for more information.)

Authority

See the organizational chart on page 8.

Mile Hi Chapter Structure

MEM
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The Executive Board of this Chapter shall have the authority to make recommendations to the members on matters of Forum policy and the operation of the organization. It shall protect all interests of the members by enforcing the National and State Constitutions and the by-laws of this Chapter. Between meetings they shall have the power to direct the affairs of the Chapter.

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for managing the Hall/lounge and building of the Mile Hi GI Forum. They have the authority to establish operating procedures and selecting personnel to manage and operate the hall/lounge and building. The Trustees shall be responsible for keeping the membership informed of major policy changes and should get input from members where feasible, on any major policy changes.