



Marilyn Meléndez Dykman (Mandy)
LCDR, US Coast Guard (Ret)

Marilyn M. Dykman (Mandy) was born in Manhattan NY, raised in Caguas Puerto Rico from the age of eight. Mrs. Dykman is a 20 year retired veteran who served in the Coast Guard and the Army and is passionate about taking care of her fellow veterans. She was commissioned in the U.S. Army in June 1983. Prior to her commission, she received the Parachute Badge from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC. In 1984, Mrs. Dykman received her Army aviator wings. In 1991, she joined the Coast Guard, becoming the *Coast Guard's first female Hispanic and female minority pilot*. Mrs. Dykman received her Baccalaureate degree in Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico, Cayey and her Master's degree in Counseling from the University of New Mexico, and currently holds a New Mexico, Counselor and National Certified Counselor License.

The highlight of her Army career was commanding a Tactical Air Traffic Control Company of over 200 troops as a junior officer. Two of her Company platoons supported 1st Cavalry Brigade and Second Armor Division during Operation Desert Storm. As a Commanding Officer and an Aircraft Commander, it was always about the Mission and the People, and if both were not carefully nurtured, both would fail.

As an Aircraft Commander in the Coast Guard, she was instrumental in the rescue over 72 individuals during the 93' California floods, receiving recognition by the governor of California. Mrs. Dykman retired from the Coast Guard in 2004. Following her retirement, she pursued a Master's degree in Counseling at the University of New Mexico, graduating with distinction in May 2011. She mentored military men and women through many aspects of their lives and lived the same issues of upheaval, loss, and continual transition.

Upon receiving her master's degree, Mrs. Dykman, served as the Director of the Veterans Resource Center (VRC), University of New Mexico (UNM) for over three years. Like many veterans transitioning into academia, Mrs. Dykman experienced the impact entering unfamiliar ground. Through her experience, she created programs to help veterans transition into UNM such as, the 3-credit/hour Veterans Transition Resiliency and Leadership course; the Vet-2-Vet Peer Mentoring Program, and the Graduation Recognition Dinner where veterans and military service members receive the red/white/blue honor cord and the VRC challenge coin. Her final mission was creating the Green Zone training, which launched in Fall 2014 to train faculty and staff how to work with students with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and PTSD, using veteran's leadership strengths and military training to succeed at UNM.

Her mission continues as more veterans return home. In September 2014, she assumed the role of the New Mexico State Approving Agency Bureau Chief for the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services. She approves post-secondary and vocational programs to train veterans and other eligible persons to receive GI Bill® education benefits. She also served as the Veteran's Education Program Director, working with colleges and universities to establish Veterans' Resource Centers on Campus to support military and veterans transitioning to school. In 2018, she was selected for the "SAMHSA/VA Albuquerque Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families," to develop and implement strategic action plan to improve local suicide prevention efforts in New Mexico.

Married to Matthew Dykman for 36 years. She has two sons – Josh Dykman - 31, a Coast Guard Academy graduate with a degree in Electrical Engineering and James - 24, a graduate from Trinity University, San Antonio, TX, with a degree in Mathematical Finance and Music Minor.

