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Mr. Rooter® President Chair of VetFran Committee, Face of Campaign

Mr. Rooter Corporation President Mary Kennedy Thompson is the new chairwoman of the International Franchise Association's (IFA) VetFran Committee, as well as one of the faces of its new campaign.

A former Marine, the VetFran program is near and dear to Thompson's heart. It gives honorably discharged U.S. veterans incentives and discounts on purchasing franchises.

"Helping veterans transition into entrepreneurship is a great way for us to tell them 'thank you' for serving our nation," Thompson said. "I became accustomed to following systems in the military, and it's helped me succeed in franchising – where systems are the foundation of success."

After serving eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps, Thompson owned multiple franchises. Now as a franchisor, she's helping others follow in her footsteps.

With thousands of military servicemen and women returning to American soil, the VetFran Committee is promoting the VetFran Program like never before. They are lobbying for the Help Our Veterans Own Franchises Act, which establishes tax credits for franchising companies and veterans.

The IFA also offers its Certified Franchise Executive training through its newly created "Franchising for Freedom" program for returning service members at no cost. Participating franchisors and franchisees will train, mentor and support veterans and their families.

"We have the chance to make a difference in the lives of veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country," Thompson said. "After they fought to protect the American Dream we want to give them the opportunity to live that dream themselves by owning their own businesses."

Since the VetFran's inception in 1991, more than 2,000 veterans have purchased their own franchises with the help of the program. There are 403 participating franchising companies.

Lonnie Helgerson, past VetFran chairman, says he couldn't be happier or more comfortable handing the gavel over to Thompson, who was vice chairwoman last year.

"Mary's the right person with the right mission," Helgerson said. "She will drive the VetFran program to enormous heights."

Dina Dwyer-Owens, whose late father Don Dwyer Sr. started the VetFran Program, couldn't agree more.

"Mary is ideal for this position because she's passionate about helping people live out their dreams," said Dwyer-Owens, chairwoman and CEO of The Dwyer Group, Inc., parent company of *Mr. Rooter*. "Her drive and dedication have taken *Mr. Rooter* to the next level, and I'm excited to see what she will do with this new venture."

About Mr. Rooter®:

Established in 1970, *Mr. Rooter* is an all-franchised, full-service plumbing and drain cleaning company with approximately 300 franchises worldwide. Recognized by Entrepreneur magazine among its "Franchise 500" and Franchise Times Top 200, *Mr. Rooter* franchisees provide services to both residential and commercial customers. *Mr. Rooter* began franchising in 1974 and is a subsidiary of The Dwyer Group, Inc. For more information or to find the location nearest you, please visit our Web site at www.mrrooter.com.

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