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U.S. ARMED FORCES

Hegseth is purging military leaders with little explanation

By GREG JAFFE, ERIC SCHMIT AND HELENE COOPER
The New York Times Company

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has fired or sidelined at least two dozen generals and admirals over the past nine months in a series of ousters that could reshape the U.S. military for years to come.

His actions, which are without precedent in recent decades, have come with little explanation. In many cases, they have run counter to the advice of top military leaders who fought alongside the officers in combat, senior military officials said.

The utter unpredictability of Hegseth’s moves, as described in interviews with 20 current and former military officials, has created an atmosphere of anxiety and mistrust that has forced senior officers to take sides and, at times, pitted them against one another.

Hegseth has delayed or canceled the promotions of at least four senior military officers because they previously worked for Gen. Mark Milley, a former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff whom President Donald Trump loathes and has repeatedly accused of disloyalty. One is Maj. Gen. James Patrick Work, who was expected to be the deputy commander at U.S. Central Command, which oversees troops in the Middle East, officials said.

Work, one of the Army’s most combat-experienced officers, played a crucial role leading U.S. and Iraqi troops to victory over the Islamic State group in Mosul, Iraq, during the first Trump administration. He also served as Milley’s executive officer in 2018, which might have led Hegseth to view him with skepticism, senior Army officials said.

Despite the strong backing of top Army leaders, Work remains in limbo, his future uncertain, senior military officials said.

Other officers fell out of favor after being targeted on social media by right-wing influencers or because they had voiced support years earlier for diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Rear Adm. Milton Sands, the commander of the Navy SEALs, who pushed to have female instructors in SEAL training,

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ANDREW HARNIK / POOL VIA AP

President Donald Trump is greeted by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth before speaking to a gathering of top U.S. military commanders in September at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Quantico, Va. Since becoming Trump’s defense secretary, Hegseth has embarked on the biggest purge of top military brass in the nation’s history.



WADE VANDERVORT

Jan Jones Blackhurst, the first woman to be elected mayor of Las Vegas, will be honored this week by Silver State Equity with its Ally Leadership award, in recognition of her longstanding commitment to the LGBTQ+ community in Las Vegas.

TRAILBLAZERS

Jan Jones Blackhurst to be honored for pioneering LGBTQ advocacy in Las Vegas

Editor’s note: Este artículo está traducido al español en la página 10.

By GRACE DA ROCHA
A version of this story was posted on lasvegassun.com.

When Jan Jones Blackhurst first spoke with the Lambda Business Association, she was greeted with a bouquet of flowers — and a startling realization: Nobody had been “giving voice to this extraordinary part of our community,” she said.

✦ The association was one of the era’s most prominent LGBTQ+ organizations for working professionals. In the 1990s, Jones Blackhurst became the first Las Vegas mayor to forge a relationship with the group. During her tenure through 1999, she also became the first mayor to serve as grand marshal of the Gay Pride Parade and participated in the AIDS Walk, even at a time when such actions risked intense public scrutiny. ✦ On Wednesday, Silver State Equality will honor Jones Blackhurst for her support of the LGBTQ+ community and work in fighting for gender equality.

“When I was first elected mayor, there really wasn’t an LGBTQ community — there was, but they were invisible,” Jones Blackhurst recalled in an interview. “During the ’90s, we really worked together to find a voice; to find a presence; to find a collaboration and a community; and to really work for LGBTQ rights, roles and visibility. Because when you believe in humanity and the basic goodness of humanity, you have the privilege and the obligation to make sure you give them voice. And sometimes, having a title gives them voice because if you’re not afraid, then others won’t be afraid.”

Jones Blackhurst grew up in Southern California and later moved to Las Vegas and started making a name for herself locally as a spokesperson for her family’s car dealership. She made history as the first woman to serve as Las Vegas mayor in 1991, when she was elected to succeed Ron Lurie as the 20th person to hold the office.

It was a dare that pushed Jones Blackhurst, then only known as Jan Jones, into the city’s highest role for not one but two terms, she said. Jones Blackhurst’s popularity was clear in 1995, when voters reelected her with 72% of the vote.

While mayor, Jones Blackhurst oversaw the explosive growth of Las Vegas along with the redevelopment of Fremont Street, including the 1995 opening of the Fremont Street Experience.

But Jones Blackhurst might be known most for her work with communities that were historically ignored by city government.

The housing and outreach plan she drafted on behalf of the homeless community has been used as a model in cities around the United States.

She also constantly stood in support of LGBTQ residents, even in the face of agitators rallying against equality acts and discussions on legalizing same sex marriage,

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CCSD

Legacy secure, Green Valley choir mentor in running for Grammy

Editor’s note: Este artículo está traducido al español en la página 10.

By HILLARY DAVIS
A version of this story was posted on lasvegassun.com.

No one has joined a choir at Green Valley High School since the day it opened in 1991 without singing for Kim Ritzer.

Now, as a semifinalist for the Recording Academy and Grammy Museum’s Music Educator Award, the career teacher’s dedication is being recognized, not just by more than 30 years of students, but by the same organization that gives out one of the highest honors in professional entertainment.

Ritzer attended schools in the Clark County School District from kindergarten through high school, and she was a choir kid the whole time. She said she

never wanted to do anything else but teach choir. Except for her first year of teaching at the now-shuttered Robison Middle School, she’s spent her career at Green Valley in Henderson.

Ritzer said anyone can be a singer, and not everyone has to be a soloist. Choral singing takes teamwork. But for optimal results, a singer still must work hard. The gratification isn’t instant and can’t be looked up on a phone.

Yet this year she has 340 students between all of her ensembles. About 50 singers come to her “early bird” period, starting at 6 a.m., to be part of one of the school’s capella groups.

“Being in a music program is like being in sports, except our season is all year long,” Ritzer said. “These kids work hard all year long to create everything that we do. And the principals

here know that the performing arts are the heart of the school.”

Principal Kent Roberts nominated Ritzer for the honor, calling her a mentor to students and colleagues alike and a cheerleader for Green Valley.

“More than once, she’s had former students come up to her and tell her that she saved their life because she encouraged them to be part of the choir and be part of something bigger than themselves,” Roberts said. “She saw in them some talent that they didn’t even know they had. And not only did she identify it, she brought it out of them and got them to be confident in their abilities to perform in front of other people.”

When COVID-19 interrupted in-person schooling in 2020 and Ritzer had to instruct dozens of vocalists at a time remotely, Rob-

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CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS

Kimberly Ritzer, choir teacher at Green Valley High School, poses Nov. 3 for a portrait in her classroom. Ritzer, who has taught at the Henderson school since it opened in 1991, is a semifinalist for the Recording Academy and Grammy Museum’s Music Educator Award.