

JACQUI CLAY

Jacqui Clay, a native of Queens, New York, was an Army command sergeant major for 25 years (1979-2004), serving with and leading troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and training more than 8,000 soldiers as drill sergeant, communications instructor, and primary leadership instructor. Her military career culminated with some of the Army's highest medals: Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, and Meritorious Service.

Following her retirement, Clay joined the Center for Academic Success High School in Sierra Vista, Arizona, as director of its Character Education and Independent Study program. In 2007, after just two years, she was named the VFW State of Arizona Teacher of the Year.

Clay currently works at Buena High School where she teaches character education as part of the Career Explorations curriculum (mandatory for incoming students). Using CHARACTER COUNTS! in the district's dropout prevention program, she created the Sierra Vista Citizen's in Action Club, where students perform character-based skits and talk about bullying at middle and elementary schools. She also developed and implemented the district's character-based Summer Cruise program to help eighth grade students prepare for high school.

Clay has a bachelor's degree in Information Technology from Park University, a master's degree in Educational Technology from the University of Arizona, and is pursuing a doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Liberty University. Her goal is to become a high school principal.

Clay lives in Hereford, Arizona, with husband James. They have seven children and 12 grandchildren.