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BONNIE LAIDERMAN

PRESIDENT OF VETERANS HOME CARE

MOST
INFLUENTIAL
BUSINESS WOMEN

Bonnie Laiderman's biggest success came out of tragedy.

Her stepfather passed away at 64 from leukemia, which Laiderman said was due to chemical exposure during the Korean War. And then, in 2002, her mother passed away from breast cancer.

Right before Laiderman's mother died, she learned of the "aid and attendance" pension offered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which assists vets and spouses of vets who served during World War II, the Vietnam War or the Korean War. Her mother would have qualified for this pension, which provides an additional payment to VA pensioners and survivors who require the aid and assistance of another person.

"I was very frustrated because when I found out about the pension, it was hard enough to get all of the documents together and the next day I found out that my mother was terminal," Laiderman, 71, said. "She finally found something to help her, and she was going to die. I was furious. I took her home to St. Louis, and she died 11 days later."

From these frustrations, Laiderman founded Veterans Home Care (VHC), starting with 23 clients in 2003. Laiderman, president of the company, now has 2,500 clients for whom VHC provides home care through the pensions offered by the VA.

"This pension was never intended to be used," Laiderman said of the aid and attendance pension. "They didn't expect this little girl from Brooklyn to come along and figure it out. Nobody believed me."

Through Laiderman's work advocating the advantages of the pension, VHC is expected to generate 2017 revenue of \$36 million. The organization currently has 110 employees located across 10 states. In addition, VHC contracts to assist qualifying veterans across 44 states for direct home care. Laiderman's husband, Howard, left his import-export auto business to join his wife and is now the CFO.

Laiderman said that it was not easy, even



BEST ADVICE?

I really think one of the biggest problems in America today is people don't know what they have. They're always looking for something else — just be happy with what you have.

in 2003, as a woman owning a business that served veterans. "I used to come home crying every night," she said of her first few years at VHC. "Being in a man's world with veterans and wherever you go you're known as 'that woman' — I'm always referred to as 'that woman.' But moving past that, I became a peer instead of a fear. I now get a lot of respect."

VHC has served more than 13,000 clients, according to Laiderman, and helps veterans in need, even if they don't require the direct home care services that VHC provides.

"Bonnie has been faced with very tough decisions and challenges, and she faces them with a razor-sharp focus on how much good

she can do to help and how to overcome issue after issue," said Donna Appel, national sales director of VHC.

Laiderman has volunteered with Lydia's House, the Jewish Federation, the American Red Cross and the Armed Force Committee of Missouri and Illinois. She is also the co-chair of the Women Warriors Baby Shower through the Red Cross, which honors expectant or new military mothers and spouses.

During her downtime, Laiderman, a New York native, enjoys traveling with her husband, and has two daughters and two grandsons.

—Katlyn Keller