



Tamra Sipes is the surviving spouse of Navy Search and Rescue Corpsman HM1 Robert E. Sipes, who lost his life at the age of 34 on October 8, 1995, while attempting to rescue children from a house fire. During his distinguished service, Robert flew more than 55 rescue missions while stationed at El Toro Marine Corps Base and was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Heroism—the highest honor for valor outside of combat. He was also named EMT of the Year by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians and received a meritorious promotion while stationed at Kaneohe Marine Corps Base, an honor granted annually to one service member. At the time of his passing, he was the father of three young children, ages 10, 2, and 6 months.

Tamra met her husband while working at Disneyland in California and went on to build a career rooted in service and leadership. Utilizing Chapter 35 Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance benefits, she graduated from Skagit Valley College and earned several professional designations in her field.

Following her husband's final duty station on Whidbey Island, Tamra chose to remain in the community, despite having no immediate family or established support system. Over the past 25 years, she has become deeply committed to community service, holding volunteer and leadership roles with organizations including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Island County, Economic Development Council of Island County, and Soroptimist International of the Americas.

With her children grown, Tamra dedicated herself to advocating for military surviving spouses. In 2024, alongside fellow military surviving spouses, she founded Gold Star Spouses of America, Inc., where she currently serves as National President. In this role, she works to foster meaningful connections among survivors, empower spouses to advocate for their earned benefits, honor and preserve the legacy of their loved ones, and expand opportunities for education and leadership development.