

Royce Pollard named Clark County's First Citizen

Community Foundation to present award to former mayor on June 3

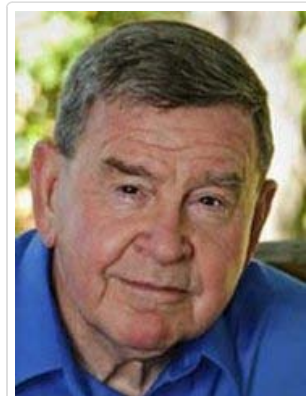


Photo by Troy Wayrynen

Former Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard, shown here enjoying a book of quotes from President Harry S. Truman while cleaning out his office at City Hall last December. In the background the music of John Philip Sousa plays.

By The Columbian

Wednesday, April 28, 2010



Royce Pollard

A U.S. Army officer learned he was being transferred to Vancouver Barracks.

The officer told his superior, "I didn't know we had a place in Canada."

The superior replied, "No, it's along the Columbia River."

That bit of geographical confusion has become a familiar joke these days. But that was a significant exchange in 1985: The Vancouver-bound Army officer was Royce Pollard.

Now Pollard's role in helping the Vancouver area raise its profile has led to his selection as Clark County's First Citizen for 2010. The Community Foundation of Southwest Washington announced the honor Wednesday.

Pollard, who recently finished his sixth and final term as mayor, will receive the award on June 3 at the Hilton Vancouver Washington.

"I was flabbergasted," Pollard said Wednesday afternoon following the announcement. "I am honored. An awful lot of people contributed to my success. I consider myself a placeholder for them."

If you go

- What: First Citizen2 010 reception for former Vancouver mayor Royce Pollard.
- When: June 3.
- Where: Hilton Vancouver Washington, 301 W. Sixth St.

- Tickets: \$35.
 - Information: 360-694-2588
- or www.vancouverusa.com.

Pollard, who retired from the Army in November 1988, said he wouldn't even try to start citing individuals off the top of his head. But Pollard characterized them as "People who care, people who give money to move the community forward, people who believe in the vision we — not just I — laid out for the community."

In Wednesday's announcement, the Community Foundation noted that Vancouver grew from the 11th-largest to the fourth-largest city in the state under Pollard's leadership.

The foundation's press release included a high-level endorsement from Gov. Chris Gregoire.

"Today, Vancouver has an identity of its own — it is no longer a suburb of Portland, nor is it a town in British Columbia. Royce not only helped shape your city's present, but he also has laid a solid foundation for continued growth," Gregoire wrote.

In his letter of endorsement, City Manager Pat McDonnell wrote: "I believe his greatest accomplishment was giving our community a stronger sense of self. ... In many ways, he woke us up and opened our eyes to our potential and possibilities."

Pollard follows 2009 First Citizen Florence Wager, an advocate for parks, recreational opportunities and healthy communities.

The award has been given since 1939. Recipients are chosen by a committee that includes former First Citizens.

"It's important to point out that this isn't simply awarded to an elected official who has had a number of accomplishments," said Rick Melching, president of the community foundation.

"It goes beyond that. They took into consideration the various boards and variety of organizations Royce has been part of," said Melching, who wasn't a member of the selection committee.

In addition to 14 years as mayor and seven years as a city councilor, Pollard has held positions with 22 organizations in Clark County.

"We had no intention of settling here," Pollard said. "In my 27 years in the U.S. Army, we moved 19 times. "I was in Korea, and I tried for three years to go to Fort Lewis, Washington. That's where I started my career, and Margaret's family was from up there."

He was offered Vancouver Barracks, and that's when Pollard said, "I didn't know we had a place in Canada."

"That was 25 years ago," Pollard said, and his 1985 reaction no longer is the automatic response. "I believe we have changed that."

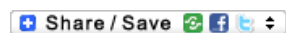
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A full listing of criteria and a list of past recipients is available at www.cfsww.org/events/firstcitizenaward/.

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