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Mark Matthias named as Clark County's 2008 First Citizen

Vancouver, WA – April 24, 2008. The Community Foundation for Southwest Washington announced today that Mark Matthias has been selected as Clark County's First Citizen for 2008. The First Citizen Award recognizes a Clark County resident who has modeled exemplary citizenship through their actions and service to the community. Recipients of the Award, presented since 1939, are selected by a volunteer committee of community leaders and past award recipients. The honor will be presented on Thursday, June 5, 2008 from 5 to 7 p.m. at an event to be held at *The Columbian*, 415 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver.

“Mark exemplifies the values and tradition of the First Citizen Award. The contributions Mark has made, often quietly and in an unassuming manner, are far reaching, and his energy, creativity, and endless personal and corporate generosity are extraordinary,” expressed Richard Melching, Community Foundation President. “By honoring great individuals like Mark, we build on an important tradition of community citizenship that is the hallmark of our community.”

For over a decade, Mark Matthias has been building and serving the community through extraordinary leadership, creativity, and personal commitment. While best known as a restaurateur (Mark co-founded Beaches Restaurant and Bar in 1995), Mark has also given quietly and generously, impacting the lives of the young and those in need. Upon the founding of

Beaches Restaurant, Mark launched Beaches Charity Fund, a separate nonprofit organization. Funded largely through the Beaches Summer Cruise In, the Fund has generated several hundred of thousands dollars in contributions, with the goal of awarding \$1 million by 2011. Share House, YWCA Clark County, the Vancouver School District Foundation, Boys and Girls Clubs of Southwest Washington, and the Police Activities League are among the recipients of the Beaches Charity Fund.

Mark is also known for making a personal commitment to the things he values. For the Washington State School for the Blind, he sponsors fund-raising events and is directly involved with the School's students as part of a "Rod Rally," where volunteers drive through the greater Vancouver area with blind/visually impaired students as navigators. His Dr. Seuss breakfast of Green Eggs and Ham program promotes reading in 48 elementary schools, impacting 8,000 children in just five days. For the Chamber of Commerce, he hosts "Leads and Needs," a networking event, and, through a last-minute appeal for help, he saved an annual Christmas breakfast, a 26 year old tradition

In addition, Mark has served on community board of directors, including the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Washington where his fund-raising success has been described as "monumental." Mark is also a member of the Vancouver School District Foundation's Board of Directors, serving two years as President, during which time the Foundation grew in size and capacity.

Mark's community leadership extends into his business life. At Beaches Restaurant, Mark is described as a "quiet, unassuming leader" who sets an example for his employees to follow. His employees, known as the "Beaches Team," reflect Mark's attributes, values and spirit of community building and volunteering. They personally give of their time for a range of charitable causes and events.

Below is a sampling of supporters' comments in letters of endorsement.

Barbara Sheldon, Executive Director, Washington School for the Blind Foundation. “For over a decade, Mark has been building and serving the community through extraordinary leadership, creativity, and personal commitment. His ability to rally others and be the binding agent has created opportunities for others to become involved in his quest to improve the lives of those around him.”

Ginger Metcalf, Executive Director, Identity Clark County. “People ‘give’ in many ways and Mark does it with grace, quietly and purposefully – but always from his heart.”

Bob Gaylor, President and CEO, Innovative Services NW. “Let it simply be said that the selfless charity and exceptional gift of time, talent and treasure certainly makes Mark Mathias stand out in a crowd of noteworthy citizens deserving of this First Citizen recognition.

Dr. Jim Sork, Director, Vancouver School District Foundation. “One of the qualities I admire most about Mark is his willingness to make a personal commitment to the things he values. . . .In my mind, it is this attribute that separates those of us who care about our community from those few who, by their personal efforts, truly shape the community and therefore qualify to be recognized as its ‘First Citizens.’”

About the First Citizen Awards Event:

The event will begin at 5 p.m. with a reception in Mark Matthias’ honor. The formal awards program will be held at 6:15 p.m. Regents Bank is the presenting sponsor in partnership with The Community Foundation, the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, and *The Columbian*. Hors d’oeuvres, desserts, and beverages will be served. Tickets are \$35 per person and can be reserved by calling the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce at 360-694-2588.

About the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington:

The Community Foundation helps a broad cross section of citizens build stronger communities through effective philanthropy. One of the nation’s 700 community foundations, it is a tax-exempt, public charity that primarily serves southwest Washington. The Foundation holds distinct Funds, ranging in size from \$10,000 to over \$3 million, that are pooled, managed, and

invested to generate growth and income for granting and inflation purposes. Governed by a volunteer Board of local leaders, the Foundation offers services to donors and nonprofit organizations and a wide range of benefits to the community. In total, the Community Foundation has infused more than \$80 million into the community since it was established in 1984.

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