

The Gratitude Circle

The Gratitude Circle is a partnership between the Conejo Recreation & Park District and Play Conejo. Annually, the CRPD Board of Directors celebrates and honors individuals who have made a significant contribution of time, effort, or energy to recreation and parks in the Conejo Valley.

The Gratitude Circle is also a place where people can honor loved ones and support CRPD's parks and programs through charitable giving.

Past Honorees

2019

Tim Hagel
Elayne Haggan
Bruce Stanton

2018

Richard F. Newman

2017

Doris Granholm

2016

Frances Prince
Rorie Skei

2015

Dennis Gillette
Mike Berger
Barbara Kloster

2014

Tex Ward
Mark Jacobsen

CONEJO RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Nickles, *Chair*
Nellie Cusworth, *Vice Chair*
George M. Lange, *Director*
Susan L. Holt, *Director*
Chuck Huffer, *Director*
Jim Friedl, *General Manager*
Tex Ward, *General Manager Emeritus*



The Conejo Recreation & Park District is an independent special district serving the Conejo Valley since 1963. Its mission is to enrich the quality of life for our community by preserving and enhancing recreational opportunities, parks, and open space.



Play Conejo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created in 2012 to provide volunteer, charitable, and financial support for public park facilities and recreation programs which benefit Conejo Valley residents. Play Conejo is raising funds to help the District maintain quality parks and offer diverse and affordable recreation programs.



The Board of Directors of the
Conejo Recreation & Park District
invites you to...



THE GRATITUDE CIRCLE INDUCTION CELEBRATION

honoring

JIM GILMORE
KAREN LINDSEY
STEVE WILEY



*for their Dedication to the People of
Conejo Valley through Recreation, Parks, and Open Space*

Monday, June 21, 2021 · 5:30pm
Conejo Creek North Park

THE GRATITUDE CIRCLE

Honorees



JIM GILMORE

SENIOR PARK DEVELOPMENT PLANNER, CRPD

Jim began his career with CRPD in 1968 when there were only a handful of parks and employees. He was the right person, in the right profession, at the right time for the Conejo Valley.

In 1968, the Conejo Recreation and Park District and the City of Thousand Oaks were both only 5 and 4 years old. The Conejo Valley only had about 25,000 residents surrounded by large working ranches like the Russell Ranch, Lang Ranch, McCrea Ranch, MGM Movie Ranch, and Dos Vientos Ranch.

As portions of the ranches began to subdivide and create today's neighborhoods, City planners and Park planners like Jim joined together to ensure park land was acquired and improved to serve the quickly growing community. Jim recognized the need to plan for future growth and decided to earn a Master's Degree from CSUN with a thesis entitled: "A Plan for Citizen Involvement in the Master Planning Process for Recreation and Park Areas and Facilities: Open Space and Trail Systems." He used his thesis to write CRPD's initial Master Plan, serving as the City's Recreation Element to the General Plan, which we still use today (as amended).

Jim worked on designing and building CRPD parks from 1968 through 1999. When he started, CRPD had 52 acres of developed parkland and 50 acres of open space. At retirement, CRPD had about 971 acres of developed parkland and 13,500 acres of open space.

During Jim's 31 years, CRPD added an astounding 38 parks! His favorite acquisition and park project is the Conejo Creek Park because it is the central park for Thousand Oaks and serves many diverse uses. After Jim retired, he consulted on park projects and helped design the Dos Vientos Community Park. He even worked with the neighboring cities on their park projects and continued his work to improve the community, serving the Conejo Valley Historical Society, serving as a Board Member and President.

KAREN LINDSEY

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
ADMINISTRATOR, CRPD

Karen Lindsey began her career with CRPD as a part-time after-school recreation leader in 1973, making \$2.26/hour 10 hours/week. The generous compensation package had her hooked, so she stayed with CRPD - moving through virtually every recreation job classification - until her retirement as Recreation and Community Services Administrator in 2015— 42 years later.

During her career, Karen served as the Recreation Services Manager over the Community Centers (TO, Borchard, Conejo, and Dos Vientos) and the Teen Center, Youth Outreach Program, Outdoor Unit and the District's Reservations system.

Under Karen's oversight, the recreation program guide, which was already loaded with thousands of recreation classes and programs, increased program sessions from 4 to 5 sessions/year, generating



additional revenue and allowing the District to offer even more recreational opportunities for the community. Karen has a passion for helping and engaging with uninvolved and at-risk youth. She worked closely with the City and School District on nurturing the Youth Outreach Program. She also oversaw the implementation of the Homework Club at 850 Warwick, which evolved into the Safe Passage Program that works with TOPD and many other community partners to help kids and families reduce exposure to crime and increase access to educational and recreational activities.

While at CRPD, Karen excelled at developing community relations and participated on numerous civic and non-profit Boards. She is a "board member emeritus" of Conejo Valley Senior Concerns and served as a Board Member and President of California Park and Recreation Society, District 8. Her passion for helping the community and involvement with partner organizations helped CRPD earn its reputation as a premier recreation agency nationwide.



STEVE WILEY

RECREATION SERVICE MANAGER, CRPD

Steve started working for CRPD full time in 1977, but his relationship with CRPD started earlier as a teen in the late 60's hanging out at Conejo Community Park and attending Casey Kasem dance concerts. After graduating TOHS in '71, Steve worked part-time as a recreation leader at Conejo Community Center for a few years.

As a Recreation Coordinator, Steve was key in developing the Cultural, Outdoor and Therapeutic Recreation Units. Developing them further as a Supervisor and then overseeing these units, as well as Sports, Aquatics, and Senior Units as a Recreation Services Manager.

Steve's Recreation Units have been recognized regionally, statewide, and nationally over the years, and he "set the stage" for those who followed him to continue serving the Conejo Valley. In the early '80s, Steve was assigned to work at the Janss House and serve as CRPD's representative to a 3-way partnership with the City of Thousand Oaks, Arts Council of the Conejo Valley, and CRPD to provide arts programming at schools and in the community. This partnership led to the creation of a variety of successful programs and ultimately to the Hillcrest Center for the Arts.

Valuing relationships, alliances, and partnerships, Steve served as an ambassador for CRPD that helped nurture cooperative and collaborative programs with institutions, non-profits, private businesses, and CRPD to provide programs and recreational opportunities which no single entity was willing or able to provide. His calm demeanor, focus on positive outcomes for all involved, and commitment to the community enabled Steve to convince others to try new ideas and programs for the common good.

Steve currently serves as a director for the non-profit "Musicians on a Mission California" which provides access to music through instrument "gift-aways," mentorship, and performing opportunities for our youth and community members.

The Board of Directors of the Conejo Recreation and Park District are grateful to Jim, Karen, and Steve for their positive impact. The quality of life in the Conejo Valley is due, in no small part, to their unflinching dedication and passion for recreation, parks, and open space.