



## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023**

**11:00 A.M.**

**REMOTE AND IN PERSON ATTENDANCE**

The Community Relations & Public Affairs Committee meeting will be conducted both remotely, and in person.

The public may attend the meeting in person in the Council Chambers at Lacey City Hall, 420 College Street SE, Lacey, Washington, or you may view or listen to the meeting by using one of the following platforms:

Live through Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85607120922>

Live or as a recording on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/live/EXsWM3VAXzk>

Listen via telephone: **(888) 788-0099** or **(877) 853-5247** (Webinar ID: **856 0712 0922**)

### **SPIRIT OF LACEY AWARD**

*RICK WALK, INTERIM CITY MANAGER  
(PRESENTATION)*



**COMMUNITY RELATIONS &  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
April 3, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Spirit of Lacey Award

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Review nomination of Ken Balsley for the Spirit of Lacey Award and make a recommendation to the City Council

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**STAFF CONTACT:** Rick Walk, Interim City Manager *RW*  
Shannon Kelley-Fong, Assistant City Manager *SKF*

**ORIGINATED BY:** City Manager Department

**ATTACHMENTS:** 1. [Spirit of Lacey Award Policy \(Attachment\)](#)  
2. [Spirit of Lacey Award Nomination Form \(Attachment\)](#)

**FISCAL NOTE:** None

**WORK PLAN GOAL AND STRATEGY:** Not Applicable

**OTHER POLICY** Lacey City Council Policy and Procedures, Section 10.05 Spirit of Lacey Award

**PRIOR REVIEW:** None

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**BACKGROUND:** The Spirit of Lacey Award was created by the Lacey City Council to recognize individuals, organizations, and businesses who have made significant contributions to the betterment of the Lacey community. It is the highest award that the Lacey City Council can bestow to honor exceptional service to the community.

As per policy, the Lacey Community Relations Committee reviews and deliberates on each nomination received by the City. If the Committee agrees that the nominee for the Spirit of Lacey Award meets the criteria and purpose, a recommendation will be forwarded to the full City Council with documentation of support.

Past recipients of the Spirit of Lacey Award include Eric Nelson and Brady Olson for acts of individual heroism. The Lacey Sunrise Lions Club in recognition of continued service of displaying American Flags on city streets during national holidays. Also, Graeme Sackrison, Jerry Farmer and Ruth Weigelt for dedicated community service and exceptional volunteerism.

If the committee elects to forward with a recommendation for this nomination, the item would tentatively go before the full City Council at the April 6, 2023 meeting.

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## 10.5 Spirit of Lacey Award

The Spirit of Lacey Award program provides the Council a formalized means of recognizing individuals, organizations, and businesses who make significant contributions to the betterment of the greater community, or, whose acts of heroism, courage, selflessness, or exceptional volunteerism are worthy of special recognition.

### Eligibility

1. Individuals
2. Organizations – private, public, and not-for-profit
3. Businesses

### Criteria

1. Exceptional contributions that promote the betterment of the community (e.g. long-term extraordinary individual or group volunteerism that meets a special need in the community or provides a service not otherwise provided)
2. Actions that provide long-term value and benefit for future generations (e.g. initiating a major new program with broad community-wide benefit and that fills a critical need)
3. Acts of heroism and selflessness (e.g. saving a life, by risking one's own life)
4. Exceptional environmental stewardship (e.g. a major land donation that protects and preserves sensitive environmental property)
5. Extraordinary generosity or investment in the community (e.g. a major cash or land donation valued that helps address an important community need and enhances the overall community)

### Frequency

1. As merited

Note: The *Spirit of Lacey Award* recognizes 'exceptional' and 'out-of-the-ordinary' contributions to the community. It is intended to be awarded sparingly and on a limited basis so as not to diminish its significance and the extraordinary contributions of recipients.

### Nomination Process

1. Nominations can be made by submitting a nomination form in writing at any time to the Council Community Relations Committee, 420 College Street, Lacey, WA, 98509, or via e-mail to [council@ci.lacey.wa.us](mailto:council@ci.lacey.wa.us). Individuals, businesses, and organizations are

welcome to submit nominations. Nomination forms should document in detail the significant and extraordinary contributions of the proposed recipient.

2. Information about the *Spirit of Lacey Award*, including this program outline, is available on the City's website for general public access and to encourage submittal of nominations.

### Selection Process

1. The Lacey Council Community Relations Committee schedules time at a regularly scheduled meeting to determine if there are any businesses, individuals, or organizations that qualify for the *Spirit of Lacey Award*.
2. Nominations received during the course of the year will be considered along with other recommendations, if any.
3. The Community Relations Committee reviews and deliberates on the merits of each nomination utilizing the criteria and principles established herein.
  - a. If the Committee determines the nomination meets the criteria, their recommendation will be forwarded to the Council with documentation supporting the exceptional actions or extraordinary contributions of the individual, business, or organization.
  - b. If the Committee determines the nomination does not meet the criteria, the nomination will not be forwarded to the Council. For those that are not forwarded to the Council, the Committee will determine the appropriate level of recognition and acknowledgment based on the information received as part of the Spirit of Lacey nomination process.

### Award and Presentation:

1. *Spirit of Lacey Awards* will be presented to recipients by the Mayor at regularly scheduled and televised Council meetings.



2. Recipients of the Award will be acknowledged on the City's official website provided permission is granted.

*Historical Record:*

1. A record of all *Spirit of Lacey Award* recipients will be maintained by the City Manager's Office and will be made available to the Community Relations Committee as a means of ensuring nominations meet the high standard of exceptional and extra-ordinary contribution to the community.

*(Refer to Attachment 10.05A – Spirit of Lacey Award Nomination Form)*



Shaping  
our community  
together

CITY OF LACEY  
420 COLLEGE STREET SE  
LACEY, WA 98509  
PHONE: 360.438.2620  
FAX: 360.412.3185  
KADAMS@CI.LACEY.WA.US

## SPIRIT OF LACEY AWARD NOMINATION FORM

The purpose of the *Spirit of Lacey Award* program is to recognize individuals, organizations, and businesses who make significant contributions to the betterment of the greater community, or, whose acts of heroism, courage, selflessness, or exceptional volunteerism are worthy of special recognition. Please see attached policy for detailed information on the eligibility, criteria, and process for the program.

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

Ken Balsley (posthumous- widow Jan Teague)

Name

4434 24th Ave. SE, Lacey, WA 98503

Address

City, State, Zip

360/456-8964

Phone Number

Email address

Please select one:     Individual     Business     Organization

Provide a detailed explanation of the significant and extraordinary contribution of the nominee:

Please see attached.

*(If needed, please use a separate sheet of paper.)*

### NOMINATION FORM COMPLETED BY

Erin Quinn Valcho, Museum Curator and LPCR Dept

Name

3/22/2023

Date

420 College St SE, Lacey, WA 98503

Address

City, State, Zip

360/413-3557

Phone Number

equinnva@ci.lacey.wa.us

Email address

*Erin Quinn Valcho*

Signature

March 20, 2023

Date

**MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:** CITY OF LACEY  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
420 COLLEGE STREET SE  
LACEY, WA 98503

# FOR CITY USE ONLY

	NOMINATION FOR SPIRIT OF LACEY AWARD	DATE	NAME
1	Nomination received:		
2	Nomination routed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> City Clerk <i>(reviewed for completion)</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations Committee</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Council</li> </ul>		
3	Reviewed by Community Relations Committee: <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Approved</span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Denied</span>		
4	Reviewed at Council Worksession: <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Approved</span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Denied</span>		
5	Nominee contacted: <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Accepted</span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Declined</span>		
6	Applicant notified:		
7	Award ordered:		
8	Presentation of award at City Council meeting:		

The Lacey Museum and the Lacey Parks, Culture and Recreation Department are honored to nominate Ken Balsley for the Spirit of Lacey Award.

Ken Balsley often referred to himself as a "Tumwater boy" since that was where he grew up, but his heart was fully invested in his second home, earning him the moniker "Mr. Lacey." Ken was the biggest booster that Lacey has ever known and may ever know. Every new person he met was offered a free historical tour of Lacey and the surrounding area, culminating in a trip to the Lacey Museum and lunch on him.

Shortly after graduating from the Evergreen State College in 1973 with a degree in journalism, Ken went to work for the *Lacey Leader* newspaper, Lacey's only local newspaper. He worked there first as an unpaid intern and then as a reporter and eventually editor. As a new city, Ken believed that Lacey needed a sense of community, which would then turn into support for the community's newspaper. By the time he left the newspaper in 1979, he had come to know Lacey business owners, community leaders, school administrators, residents and city officials through his effort to foster this sense of community identity. And through this effort, his love for Lacey and its future was now an indelible part of him.

Ken wrote and commented extensively on local politics, business, government and history throughout his life. For the last 14 years, he had a blog called *Ken's Corner and the Real News*, which has more than 1700 posts. But *Ken's Corner* has a 50-year history, starting back when he was at the *Lacey Leader*, continuing on at *The Olympia News* and *Impact News Magazine*. He took the column to audio when he was working for KITN Radio and when that stint ended, he began self-publishing it as a newsletter. There is no one else who has written for so long and so extensively on Lacey and the surrounding community. This is an enduring legacy, one which will be used in the years to come as historians look back on the events of the last half century.

### **Community Service**

Ken has been a volunteer for community organizations for 50 years. In 1985, as one example among decades of service, Ken served as the Chair of the Lacey Historical Commission, treasurer of the Lacey Historical Society, president of the state's centennial committee, member of the Lacey 2000 committee, member of the City of Lacey's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday committee, member of the public relations committee of the Downtown Olympia YMCA membership drive, board member for the Lacey MADFest (the largest community event at the time), an officer of the Capitol Area Photographic Society, a member of the Puget Power citizen's advisory council, publicity chair for the Washington Center for the Performing Arts opening week ceremonies and was active in the Lacey Chamber of Commerce and the Washington State Information Council. This was just his volunteer work. He also had a full-time public relations position at the North Thurston School District, was working toward a Master's degree in Public Administration and was teaching evening classes at South Puget Sound Community College. It's a wonder that he ever slept.

It would literally take a book to document everything he has done in the community, so let's highlight just a few.

#### *Lacey Civic Committee*

Ken's idea was to form a group that could tackle large projects in Lacey that would improve the community and help foster that sense of identity and community pride. He gathered movers and shakers from service clubs, local businesses and more to join him. The bulk of the committee's important work was done in 1978 and 1979, and included the construction of the Lacey Civic Plaza and saving the former City Hall building to create the Lacey Museum. Ken spoke to anyone and everyone about these and many other projects, raising funds, awareness, and support to bolster Lacey projects and its image.

#### *Lacey Chamber of Commerce (now the Lacey South Sound Chamber)*

Ken was a member of the Lacey Chamber for 50 years and on the board of directors for 13. He served as president in 2003. The Lacey Chamber has been a very important focal point for Lacey's identity since its inception in 1961 and it was in no small part due to the support of its members that Lacey became a city in 1966. Ken joined the Chamber in 1971, taking on the mantle of helping Lacey find its identity and supporting local businesses through civic work and public relations.

In 1973, the Chamber created the Lacey International Music, Arts, and Dance Festival (later MADFest) to promote Lacey, local artists, goodwill, and friendship. Lacey's first community event drew 15,000 people annually for 14 years to Saint Martin's campus to enjoy local artists, dancers, and musical entertainment. Ken was an integral part of the event, serving on the board of directors for many years and chairing the event in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, 1976. Each year, he created buttons to promote it and was a public relations booster and fundraiser for the event.

#### *Lacey Rotary Club*

Ken joined the Lacey Rotary Club in 1973 as a way to meet the leaders in the community that would hopefully support the *Lacey Leader*. He recruited a dozen new members in his first few months and would go on to sponsor over 100 people. In 1987, Ken was the club's president and under his leadership, the Lacey Rotary Club started its first Interact club in high schools to encourage service and teach leadership skills.

The Lacey Rotary Club has provided funding and volunteers for numerous projects in Lacey, including Lacey Civic Plaza, the Lacey Library, landscaping along Pacific Avenue, the Boys & Girls Club, Huntamer Park, St. Martin's College (now University) library, the Klueh clock, the train-themed playground at the Lacey Depot, and the associate Lacey Rotary historic marker.

Ken gave his own time, money and volunteer service to Lacey Rotary Club's fundraising and projects, but the exponential effect on the community of all of the people he sponsored who also served is incalculable.

### **City of Lacey Service**

Ken's volunteerism also extended to serving in local government, most particularly with the City of Lacey. Ken was the founding Chair of the Lacey Historical Commission, which was formed in 1979. He served on the Commission for 14.5 years in two stints from 1979 to 1985 and 1996 to 2005. He served on the Board of Park Commissioners (now the Parks, Culture and Recreation Board) for six and a half years. He also served on the Thurston County Historic Commission for more than six years and was still serving when he passed. One of his last projects, which is currently in progress, was to develop a historic interpretive kiosk at the RAC, a joint project of the Thurston Historic Commission and the Lacey Historical Commission.

In addition to volunteering, Ken has regularly been asked to serve by the City of Lacey and he always said yes. The City of Lacey appointed him to serve as Lacey's citizen representative on the City of Olympia's Cultural Arts Advisory Committee in 1980, eventually leading to the development of the Washington Center for the Performing Arts which opened in 1985, for which he developed the premier week publicity. He has also served on Lacey's 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday Committee, Lacey's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Committee, the new Lacey Museum exhibit committee, and the Lacey core-area planning task force, among others. He even designed the first City of Lacey flag to be raised at Lacey Civic Plaza.

For Lacey's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, Ken developed the idea for a speaker's bureau to share Lacey's history with as many people as possible. Together he and Museum Curator wrote the script and created the illustrated PowerPoint. The two of them gave the presentation to about 1200 people throughout the South Sound. He also wrote a first-person script for an actor to portray Bob Blume, an important figure in Lacey's incorporation and history. Some people actually thought the actor *was* Bob Blume, the writing was so true to life. Ken also wrote three history articles about the Lacey Chamber, Panorama, and Lacey Rotary that were published on ThurstonTalk for the anniversary.

### **Lacey Museum and Lacey History**

What will perhaps become his longest lasting legacy is the Lacey Museum and his contributions to preserving Lacey's history. In 1979, Ken was approached by Denise Keegan (then Fuchs), who was working as an intern for the City of Lacey to compile Lacey's history and to research a Historical Commission. She was concerned about the old City Hall building that had so much history as a residence, fire station and police station. Now that City Hall had moved to its new location, the property had recently been purchased by the Lacey Fire District and was slated to

be torn down. Ken agreed that the uniquely historic building should be saved and took the project to the Lacey Civic Committee and convinced them to take it on as their next project. He gathered community support and drummed up funds and donations of goods and services. The Lacey Women's Club offered to donate the property for the building, and Ken made the case to Lacey City Council to endorse the project. The City agreed to acquire the property, finance the building's move, and revise the zoning. In addition to rallying people to the cause, Ken wrote a \$35,000 federal grant (\$150,000 in today's dollars) to fund student workers to aid in construction. He also convinced Sunset Air to donate and install a furnace. The Lacey Museum was dedicated in October 1980.

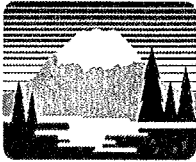
At the request of Mayor Karen Fraser, the Historical Commission was asked to develop a charitable arm of the museum and Historical Commission, which would become the Lacey Historical Society in late 1980. In addition to rounding up people to join the nonprofit board and become members, Ken wrote the first by-laws and became its treasurer for several years. This organization is still going after 40 years.

During the first year of the Lacey Historical Commission, the tradition of celebrating Lacey History began with History Day, then History Week, and eventually Lacey History Month which we still celebrate 40 years later.

In 2002, Ken proposed that the Historical Commission recognize significant contributions to local history with an award program that would eventually become the Lacey Historian of the Year award. The program has continued for 20 years and Ken himself was recognized as the 2015 Lacey Historian of the Year. On March 15, 2023, the Historical Commission renamed it the Ken Balsley Lacey Historian of the Year award.

Over the years, Ken has become the biggest champion of the Lacey Museum and Lacey history. He has made over 30 donations of artifacts, records, and photographs documenting Lacey history since 1989, with the last one coming less than a week before his death. His collection includes more than 50,000 images and 35 linear feet of records. His donations include records for every organization he was involved in and are an invaluable resource for research. He kept subject files of newspaper clippings on local elections, businesses, people, events and every conceivable subject that he ever wrote about; it fills 10 boxes and is now available for public access. He also donated his reporter notebooks and his 50 years of *Ken's Corner*, in written and audio form. The most significant of his donations is undoubtedly the *Lacey Leader* archives, with the entire run of bound newspaper volumes, photographs, negatives, and contact prints, notes and writings, and records documenting Lacey's formative years. As if that weren't enough, he has directed countless others to donate their photographs, artifacts and records to the museum.

The Lacey community has lost one of its greatest assets and biggest champions. There is no else who embodies the Spirit of Lacey more than Ken Balsley, who has served this community for more than 50 years.



Shaping  
our community  
together

CITY  
OF **LACEY**

CITY OF LACEY  
420 COLLEGE STREET SE  
LACEY, WA 98509  
PHONE: 360.438.2620  
FAX: 360.412.3185  
KADAMS@CI.LACEY.WA.US

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### NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name Mr. Ken Balsley (passed, wife Jan)  
Address I believe his on 24th Lacey, WA 98503 City, State, Zip  
Phone Number 360-456-8964 Email address not sure

Please select one:  Individual  Business  Organization

Provide a detailed explanation of the significant and extraordinary contribution of the nominee:

Anyone who knew Ken knew his ♡ of Lacey. If chosen, I hope you find a word smith to do his ♡ of Lacey justice. I am not that, but I do know beyond a shadow of a doubt, he earned this award ☺  
(If needed, please use a separate sheet of paper.)

### NOMINATION FORM COMPLETED BY

Name Sarah Morris Date 3-15-23  
Address 4421 15th Ave SE City, State, Zip Lacey WA 98503  
Phone Number 360-556-5180 Email address realestatesarah@hotmail

Signature [Handwritten Signature] Date 3-15-23

MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO: CITY OF LACEY  
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
420 COLLEGE STREET SE  
LACEY, WA 98503

## FOR CITY USE ONLY

NOMINATION FOR SPIRIT OF LACEY AWARD		DATE	NAME
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4	Reviewed at Council Worksession: <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Approved</span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Denied</span>		
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