



This Week from the Mayor



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King Parker

Photo by Denis Law

Remembering my friend King Parker

It's hard to believe that a good deal of space in this newsletter has been devoted in recent weeks to reflecting on the lives of community leaders who have passed away, noting the impact and significant contributions they made to our city.

In this issue, my thoughts are for a long-time friend who I first got to know in 1993 when I was considering starting a publishing company in Renton. That friend, former city councilmember King Parker, passed away Tuesday night.

King, along with a number of local business leaders, spent a couple months convincing me that Renton was a very special place to live and run a business. They stressed a local newspaper was vital to help build a sense of community by reporting on all of the positive things that were taking place at that time.

Quite frankly, one of the promises that led me to start the *Renton Reporter* was a commitment by King to be a regular advertiser, an element necessary for any newspapers to survive. And he followed through on his promise.

For many years after that, I joined King and a number of other Renton civic leaders every morning for breakfast in the Renton Highlands. Every day, we would argue about the latest issues dominating the news and offer our personal solutions to those issues, as if we were in charge.

In 2003, I ran for a city council position at the same time King was running for mayor. King would have been a great mayor, but, unfortunately, he didn't win. I did win my race for a council seat, and four years later I ran for mayor at the same time King ran to regain his seat on the city council. We both prevailed and were at last given the opportunity to work together on critical city issues.



2003 City Council with Mayor Law. King Parker is to the mayor's left.



King with Patty Law

Photo by Denis Law

King was a very special person. Not only was he a devoted family man and successful business owner, but he gave a tremendous amount of his time to local and regional boards and commissions, service organizations, and later in local politics, to help steer the city towards better times. While he clearly was a "superman" in many ways, having the support of his son Jason and unofficial-adopted son, Peter Davies, to run the day-to-day operations of their retail appliance store gave him the flexibility to run a business while also serving the community.

There is no question King played a significant role in helping Renton overcome a negative reputation, based mainly from regular jabs by John Keister on KING 5's *Almost Live*, to one that today is truly considered a desired place to live, learn, work and play. He was an effective voice for economic development initiatives that included our redevelopment efforts downtown, in the Highlands, and in the South Lake Washington area, which ultimately resulted in the Seahawks, IKEA, Federal Reserve Bank, new auto dealerships, Southport and The Landing locating in Renton.

King's strength was understanding the value of collaboration and partnerships. He was a great listener and he was the one who felt egos should be left at the door so all parties could focus on what was best for this community. Disagreements did not become personal.

He modeled his belief in helping others by example. The list of organizations or local scout troops that received financial support from King and Bunnys is long. He knew it was important to show residents he was committed personally as well as financially.

He mentored kids through Communities In Schools of Renton and got personally involved in countless organizations devoted to helping others.

It is perhaps unfortunate that we don't show our full appreciation for the way others have touched our lives and their value to our community until they are gone. However, the outpouring of love and respect for King this week is an appropriate testament to the legacy he leaves this community. Baseball Hall of Famer Ernie Banks once said, "The measure of a man is in the lives he has touched." In King Parker we were blessed to have a man who in his own unique way touched all of us and as a result made Renton the vital, inclusive city we live in today.

Feedback

Comments, questions or suggestions, or just want to share all the great things that are happening in the city, please [email](#) me. Thanks for reading.