

# Snow: 'Every small town relies on people like Hal Snow'

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"It's pretty much an end of an era for the longest running law firm in the area," Henningsgaard said. "But it's a real sad day for all the lawyers who worked with Hal and knew him. He was a real gentleman and a fine attorney."

Since 1970, Snow was the city attorney of Warrenton.

"Hal was such a great support to the city of Warrenton — really loved the city of Warrenton," Linda Engbretson, Warrenton's city manager, said. "He was a great mentor and support to me."

Warrenton Mayor Mark Kujala, who was "shocked and saddened" to hear the news, said, "Our hearts are very heavy right now."

## Community builder

Snow, Kujala said, left his handprint on many institutions on the North Coast, and his influence is felt throughout the region. Snow's friends describe him as a private, humble man who, along with his family, quietly supported beloved organizations such as the Liberty Theater, the Astoria Riverfront Trolley, the Friends of the Astoria Column and the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

"Hal helped such a wide range of people and activities in Astoria," former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen said.

Steve Forrester, The Daily



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The crew at Snow & Snow in Astoria. Jeanyse and Hal Snow are seated. Hal Snow died Thursday at 75.

Astoria's former editor and publisher who sits on the Liberty's board of directors, said, "When we set out to restore the Liberty Theater, we were really in uncharted waters, and Hal was a very clear head through all of it, and quite essential to making it happen."

Snow, a major donor to local athletic programs, was the prime mover in the creation of the Lower Columbia Youth Soccer Association and the Warrenton soccer fields.

He also served on the Oregon Community Foundation board, including a stint as president, and helped to bring

grants and other charitable funds into Clatsop County.

"Every small town relies on people like Hal Snow. With common sense, intelligence, energy and personal commitment, these people are essential to community building," Forrester said in an email. "In his central roles with the Liberty Theater's restoration, the Astoria Column's restoration and the creation of the youth soccer league, Hal greatly enlarged the civic furniture of Astoria and the Columbia-Pacific region."

Daryl Birney, Snow's longtime friend, said Snow, who

preferred to eschew the limelight, "did more for the community, probably, than the community knows about."

Jordan Schnitzer, a Portland philanthropist and president of the Friends of the Astoria Column board who worked with Hal for more than 30 years, said, "In a generation where, today, everyone is so me-oriented, he was always we-oriented."

## 'The loss is huge'

Because of Snow's deep knowledge of the law and local matters, his colleagues in municipal government sought

him not just for his legal counsel but for his wisdom, according to Gil Gramson, a former Warrenton city manager and city commissioner.

"We had so much confidence in his advice," Gramson said.

Snow, an Astoria High School and University of Oregon law school graduate, and his wife specialized in handling wills, trusts, real estate and land use planning.

"Hal and Jeanyse' ... When you said one, you might as well include the other, because they were a team," Gramson said.

A devoted "Duck" who

loved his family and cared for his employees, Snow never forgot his roots, and never forgot his friends.

"Rarely in life does one meet someone who just exemplifies integrity, honesty, charm, incredible intelligence, packaged with a personality who made everyone else feel important," Schnitzer said. "He, in my opinion, just overflowed with the kind of human qualities that I know I wished I could have had more of, and I think everyone that met him felt the same way. He was principled, thoughtful, and always broke into the most effusive grin and smile when something was funny. I've never met anyone who hasn't put him on a pedestal."

"I think, for all of us who knew him and were close to him ... the loss is huge. He is irreplaceable," Schnitzer continued. "But at least we were all blessed with having known and worked with him for many years, and therefore he will live on forever, not just in his role of helping preserve and maintain the Column but in our hearts and minds. I know that, for me, there will never be a time when I go up to the Column that I won't think about his guiding hand helping us through one issue after another over the last 28 years."

Snow, Van Dusen said, "will be missed for a long time. Astoria is a better town because of Hal Snow."

# Warr: Final meeting is tonight

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no-nonsense believer in limited city government, a check on the budget and political reach of City Hall. The owner of Astoria Granite Works has represented the east side with a gruff sensibility for three terms and chose not to run for re-election in November.

Warr — whose last council meeting is tonight — has advised the City Council not to stray too far from the city's mission to provide basic services such as police, fire, roads, water and sewer. He sees the council as policymakers who set direction, but do not manage the day-to-day operation of the city.

"Our hearts can bleed as badly as they can bleed," Warr said, "but it's still not our role."

When the city does stray, he believes, it should be on something big.

One of Warr's proudest achievements is working with former Mayor Willis Van Dusen to broker an understanding between Columbia Memorial Hospital and Park Medical Center that helped pave the way for a partnership with Oregon Health & Science University.

Warr was also part of Van Dusen's team on the deal between the city, the hospital, Recology Western Oregon and the school district that transformed the former landfill into CMH Field, a project that has earned national attention.

Warr was a champion of the 17th Street Dock and the expansion of Maritime Memorial Park.

"Our primary roles are to provide to the citizens what they can't provide for themselves," he said.

## Fiscal conservative

Mayor Arline LaMear, who has served with Warr since she was elected to the City Council in 2008, said Warr was always well-prepared and pointed in his contributions. "He always let you know his opinion," the mayor said. "He wasn't afraid to state those opinions at all. But he also respected others."

Warr developed an expertise in transportation issues — he was an advocate for an elusive Astoria highway bypass — and was the city's representative on the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District, known as Col-Pac, which works to diversify and strengthen northwest Oregon's economy.

On the City Council, Warr was a fiscal conservative.

"If we came up with projects and so forth, he immediately wanted to know, 'Well, how are we going to pay for

those?'" LaMear said. "He kept us grounded so that we weren't taking on some projects that the city wasn't really able to afford."

In January, LaMear will take over the role as the council's longest-serving member, the last remnant of Van Dusen's three decades of leadership. "We've lost so much institutional memory when we lost Willis. And he had 30 years of experience. And then Russ," she said. "It's hard when you do that."

## Good old boys

Van Dusen, the mayor for 24 years before he decided against re-election in 2014, was a dominant figure at City Hall who described his network of allies as a team. Detractors, though, derided his leadership as a good old boy's club resistant to change.

Former City Councilor Drew Herzig portrayed the City Council as "lockstep" under Van Dusen and, after Van Dusen's departure, routinely scrapped with Warr in what often became Monday night political theater at City Hall.

Warr was sensitive to the good old boy label a few years ago — he once told The Daily Astorian that it never existed — but he has a more benign view today.

Warr said Van Dusen has been a friend for three decades. The former mayor, he said, had a vision and the ability to make things happen for Astoria.

"I'm proud to be part of the good old boy network because we got some really good things done," Warr said.

Skip Hauke, the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce, said Warr has been invaluable on the City Council.

"He can think of every issue from all sides. And I think he does before he makes a decision," Hauke said. "Russ never went to a council meeting with an agenda in mind. And he's just been an excellent councilor, just as steady as a rock."

Hauke, like Van Dusen, comes from a family with deep roots in Astoria. Long-time friendships and personal relationships do influence business and political decisions, but are not the exclusive avenues to power, as Herzig — who moved to Astoria from California in 2009 — showed.

"He knows a lot of people and he's been involved for a long time," Hauke said of Warr, who also spent 12 years on the Astoria School Board and served on the chamber's board. "So I guess if that makes him a member of

the old boy's group, I guess maybe he is. But so am I and so are a lot of other people that have lived in this town for so many years and have been involved in business and have been involved in the town."

"I don't think it's ever been a detriment to him. He knows the town and he loves the town."

## Policymakers

One of Warr's concerns is Astoria's inability to maintain all of the services it promises, especially in the Parks and Recreation Department, and he has been a critic of the spotty maintenance at Ocean View Cemetery, the city-run burial plots in Warrenton.

While Warr said he does not have many regrets on the policy front, he does empathize with his Uppertown neighbors who were bombarded over the years by fans of "The Goonies," the 1985 cult classic.

"I don't think that anyone could have predicted what was going to happen there," said Warr, who lives near the Goonies' house and has often had to field complaints from angry neighbors who wanted the city to take action.

Warr said the surges in visitors, especially around the bigger movie anniversary years, had a "whale of an impact on the city. And I wished that could have solved itself a little easier than what's happened."

Tourism dollars often came at the expense of Uppertown. "It brought a lot of dollars into the community," he said. "And so when tourism is such a big thing on the city's agenda, and you're allowing a neighborhood to be somewhat compromised."

"So are you working for the betterment of most of the community? Are you solving a problem for a small part of the community?" he asked. "That's a tough way to (choose) ... And I don't think there's clearly a good answer."

Warr's time at City Hall is not the only era coming to an end. He said he is in negotiations to sell Astoria Granite Works. He took over the business in 1994 after a career with Sears, Roebuck & Co.

Going forward, Warr urged the City Council to focus more on the big picture and find a better way to talk with one another outside the formality of council meetings.

"If I have a criticism of the council, it's paying way too much time and effort on things that really aren't going to materially change anything," he said. "The one thing that I really suggest that the council does is keep a dialogue going between all of the councilors."



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Duane Larson becomes emotional speaking on behalf of his family during the funeral of his father, Don Larson, the former Seaside mayor on Friday at North Coast Family Fellowship in Seaside.

# Larson: Former mayor had special relationship with children, family

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faith played in his final year. "I don't want to think about heaven," Larson told Rydman. "I've got too many things on my to-do list."

Larson loved his role as mayor, Rydman said Friday. "Five years before his retirement, he said 'I'm going to retire in four years and seven months. Then I'm going to move to Seaside and become mayor.'"

Larson's special relationship with children and family was stressed by speakers.

"His grandchildren were his greatest sense of joy for his last 25 years," Rydman said. "Don was recently honored by the city when they renamed the Seaside Library the Donald E. Larson building. He was really touched by the recognition and the family was touched that he was given the honor while still alive."

At North Coast Family Fellowship, Larson was remembered for his work with AWANA — an acronym for the scriptural phrase "approved workers are not ashamed" — a weekly church program. Larson worked with kids every Wednesday night, a role he continued even while serving in city office.

"Those kids became so important to him," Pastor Dan Dunn said. "He became our commander. I would stand by and watch by the doorway where all the kids were, he'd be surrounded by these kids and he would have them pray, and he would pray with them. I was watching this and thought, 'How many mayors are in tune with the kids of their community as this? And loved and care about them as fiercely as he did?'"

**'His grandchildren were his greatest sense of joy for his last 25 years.'**

Pastor Larry Rydman

One of those AWANA alumna, Kayla Vowels, sang "God Bless America."

Before his death, Larson asked that all remembrances be given to YUGO Ministries toward providing a house for a deserving family in the Ensenada, Mexico area.

Larson was born in Portland to Elmer and Dena Larson on March 14, 1936, and has a younger brother Jim. He is sur-

vived by his wife of 55 years, Lois; David Larson, Kristin Larson and Nicholas Clayton; Lorraine and Bill TenHaken and Kirsten and Josh Riedel, Rebecca and Brandon Winebrenner, and Erika and Alex Sneath; Duane and Elizabeth Larson and Rachel, Cameron and Paige.

Larson retired as sergeant major, the highest rank for an enlisted person.

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