

Team Work is Important – In Family or as a Commissioner

Commissioner Jim Whitty

My father was James H. Whitty. Dad's family came in on the coastwise steamer "Breakwater" to Eastside in 1908. My grandparents, Mary and Richard Whitty, started a grocery store there at Timmerman's Point where the ferryboat from Marshfield landed.

My mother was Esther Mineau. Mom's family came to Marshfield in 1926. Anna and Bill Mineau, my grandparents, lived on Commercial Avenue just below the "rock wall", which, by the way, was built by the W.P.A. in the late 1930's. Grandpa Mineau was the head saw filer at Coos Bay Lumber company when it was the largest sawmill in the world.

Grandpa Whitty was the first Whitty in Coos County to be elected to public office. He was Eastside's first Mayor in 1915 and later was elected chairman of their water board. He ran away from St. Catherine's at age 93 and walked all the way to the "Sportsman" to play "Pan" with his friends. I was sent by my dad to bring him back.

My parents had four children, all boys. I am the oldest, born on the emergency number (911) in 1931. John, Frank and Mike came next in that order. Just before Mike was born my folks called us together and said we were going to have a little sister, but we

weren't disappointed when Mike came along. John and Frank live in Coos Bay and Mike in Salem. The four of us had 19 children.

My dad was a partner of Al Peirce and took over the presidency of Al Peirce Lumber company in June 1958 when Al was killed in an automobile accident. During the big strike by the I.W.A. my dad went to the mill and told the picketers that for the first time in his life he had to cross the picket line. They had a "huddle" and then all dropped their signs and said there is no picket line here, Jim, until you finish your business. My dad was respected by all.

My wife, Donna, and I raised seven children and lived in Allegheny on the West Fork of the Millicoma for 17 years until Donna died of cancer in March, 1990. We both taught at Marshfield High School. She taught for 12 years and I taught accounting for 17 years. My wife, Nikki, and I live in Lee Valley near Myrtle Point. Nikki is the area manager of Coos Curry Douglas Business Development Corporation and is a very busy lady.

My political career started in 1972 when I was elected to the Coos Bay City Council. This was the election where "Wendell Who" was elected Mayor. His name was really Wendell Pynch

but the "World" printed a big headline and article about him. I think that got him elected.

I was appointed by the Mayor to the Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board and served four years and was elected as President of the Oregon Public Ports Association.

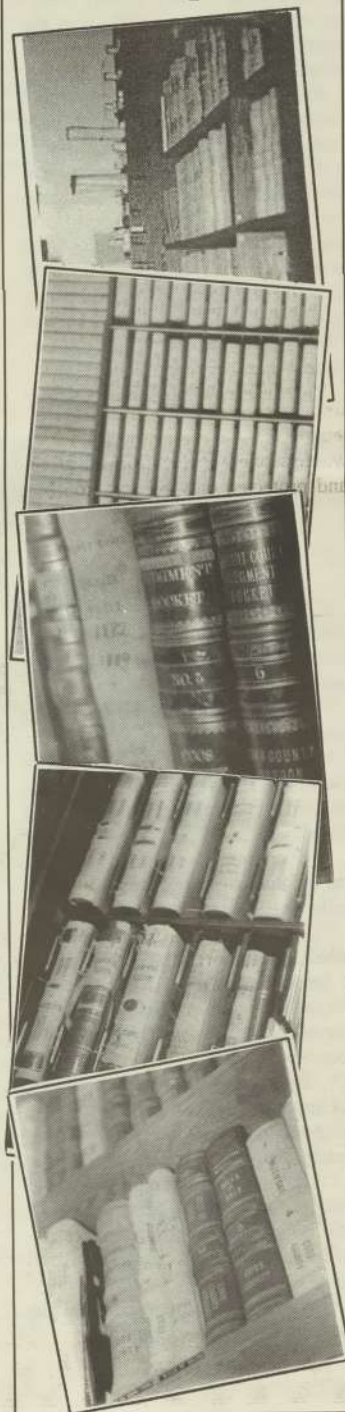
One Sunday evening fellow Commissioner Joe Jakovac called to say that the State Representative seat for District 47 was going to be open and was I interested. I talked to Donna and she said, "You're always griping about the legislature, why don't you go up there and see if you can change things." I ran unopposed in both the primary and general elections in 1984 and was re-elected four times serving through the 1993 session.

My legislative time was great and I was able to change things like bringing buses back to School District 9. After the 1993 session, Nikki and I decided to come home to Coos County. I ran for the County Commission and was elected in 1994. We love living in the Coquille Valley and working with and for the people here.

The Commission must work as a team and I believe that Bev. Owen, Gordon Ross and I do that. My dad told my brothers and me that "if you are not

happy with what you are going to be doing that day, while looking at your face in the mirror, find something else to do." I have followed his advice.

Records, Records, & More Records, & Maps!



Coos County Commissioner's Staff



LEFT TO RIGHT: Cheryl Westgaard, Office Specialist II; Belva Mai, Printer; Carol Grant, Switchboard Operator; Lois Pierce, Commissioner's Office Administrator; Virginia Harris, Board Secretary.