

Jack Browand

From: James Spengler
Sent: Tuesday, June 03, 2014 2:45 PM
To: whendrick@aol.com
Cc: Jack Browand
Subject: RE: proposal to name Del Ray park for Judy Lowe

I will forward your request to Jack Browand who will move it through the process. This is eventually a City Council decision and may not be heard until this fall.

From: whendrick@aol.com [mailto:whendrick@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 03, 2014 2:12 PM
To: James Spengler
Cc: Judy Lo; Laura Durham; Dana Wedeles
Subject: proposal to name Del Ray park for Judy Lowe

James Spengler
Director
City of Alexandria
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Dear Mr. Spengler:

On behalf of the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA), I would like to propose that the city of Alexandria name the pocket park at the corner of East Del Ray and Commonwealth Avenues for the late Judith Utterback Lowe (Judy Lowe), a longtime Alexandria civic activist and Del Ray resident.

I make this request after consulting with DRCA members and with Judy's three children, who agree that it would be a fitting tribute because of her passionate dedication to the Del Ray community and because the park is located near her home for 53 years.

While alive, Judy appreciated the fact that it was a grassroots effort of neighborhood activists who convinced the city to buy the land for the pocket park.

After her death, the DRCA collected \$7,500 for a memorial to Judy, and DRCA members agreed that investing the money in the pocket park would be the kind of neighborhood-oriented decision Judy would have championed. In 2013, the DRCA and the city agreed to a public-private partnership to pay for further construction of the community-supported park design.

Judy loved Alexandria and the Del Ray neighborhood. She believed intensely in preserving and enhancing a sense of community.

Her community spirit began early, when her family moved to Alexandria after her childhood home in Washington, DC, was taken by the city using its eminent domain power and demolished.

As Del Ray resident Ruth Brannigan stated at Judy's memorial service on December 3, 2011, "Judy would talk about how it hurt her that her DC home was torn down. This act, in part, spurred Judy's interest in preserving community, a sense of connection, and a nurturing place for a family."

Indeed, Judy devoted her life to her family, which not only included her husband, children, and grandchildren, but also her friends, neighbors, and associates.

Judy was well known as the "First Lady of Del Ray," because of her involvement in many civic activities. She was the longtime personal aide to City Councilman Lonnie Rich, a campaign aide to Congressman Jim Moran, a longtime board member of the Del Ray Citizens Association, and a member for many years of the Alexandria Democratic Committee.

As a member of Citizens Against the Stadium in 1992, Judy was instrumental in the fight against a proposed home for the Washington Redskins at Potomac Yard. Although she was a passionate Redskins fan, Judy nonetheless sacrificed the love for her home team for the love of her neighborhood, a decision she found difficult yet necessary.

"Judy's involvement in a range of civic activities in Alexandria has endeared her to countless individuals and organizations throughout the area," said Congressman Jim Moran in remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives on June 8, 2003, and published in the Congressional Record. "Her passion for her community has never faded and she has always been one of the first people to step up and volunteer for an activity or an event." (For the full text of Moran's remarks, see below.)

"When someone has called Del Ray home since 1958, you listen," wrote former Del Ray Patch editor Drew Hansen in an article about Judy after her death. "Her perspective was valuable, not just to the editor of a community news site but to mayors and other city officials. She had seen Alexandria and Del Ray change through the years and she helped make some of that change happen. She never let us forget the goal, which is to make this community and city a better place." (See Hansen's full article below.)

Ruth Brannigan called Judy "a formidable force." And as former Alexandria Mayor and State Senator Patsy Ticer recalls, that force could be felt when

Judy would hold city officials accountable for their decisions during presentations at DRCA meetings.

As membership chair of the DRCA in the early 2000s, Judy nearly single-handedly increased DRCA membership from just over 300 households to well over 500 in two years, just through friendly conversations on the street, punctuated at some point by a question: Are you a member of the DRCA?

Judy seemed to be everywhere and ready for a conversation. And she was always present for the big Del Ray events: Art on the Avenue, the Turkey Trot, the Halloween Parade, and so forth.

Judy had a nose for the facts and was always willing to correct those who got something incorrect, especially about Del Ray. During the planning process for development at Potomac Yard, she pointed out many times that the bridge carrying traffic over the railroad tracks at Route 1 was the Monroe Avenue Bridge, not the Monroe Street Bridge.

When Judy discovered that the iconic caboose located at Mount Vernon Community School had been given an incorrect name and number, Judy went into action, resulting in an accurate reassignment to the proper designation.

In 2003, the Alexandria Commission on Women awarded Judy the Marguerite Payez Leadership Award for valuable work contributed to the community through leadership qualities while training other women to assume leadership roles.

She was awarded the Alexandria's Democratic Committee's Grassroots Award in 2006. She was named an honorary citizen of the city's George Washington Birthday Parade, and served as a grand marshal in the Centennial Parade for the Town of Potomac in 2008.

Judy had a career as well. She worked for the federal government for 37 years, many of them with the Department of Defense.

In conclusion, please consider naming the pocket park at East Del Ray and Commonwealth Avenues the "Judy Lowe Neighborhood Park." Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bill Hendrickson, President

Del Ray Citizens Association

Remembering Judy Lowe

Del Ray loses a friendly neighborhood icon.

By [Drew Hansen](#)

Del Ray Patch

November 30, 2011

There aren't many people left in Alexandria who remember Willard Kane. He was my grandfather, who lived just up the road from Del Ray on E. Taylor Run Parkway. "Grand Bill" has been gone for more than 20 years now, but Judy Lowe told me she knew him. Judy knew everybody.

Sadly, Judy is gone now, too, and Del Ray must cope with the loss of a beloved neighborhood icon and an important link to what used to be.

I can't recall the moment I met Judy, but it was probably at a Del Ray Citizens Association meeting shortly before the launch of this website. She was the first person who made me feel welcome in this community. I couldn't believe a woman in her 70s could show so much interest in an online news publication. After learning she had worked for the government agency that helped develop this whole Internet thing, well, her web prowess just made sense.

She could surprise you like that.

In truth, Judy was the first ombudsman of Del Ray Patch. Every time I ran into her, she would tell me plain and simple what was incorrect, what she thought could have been done better and when she believed meetings of the Alexandria Republicans were featured too prominently in the events section on the site. Of course, this was all after she gave me a big hug and said she was worried I was working too much and needed a girlfriend.

But when someone has called Del Ray home since 1958, you listen. Her perspective was valuable, not just to the editor of a community news site but to mayors and other city officials. She had seen Alexandria and Del Ray change through the years and she helped make some of that change

happen. She never let us forget the goal, which is to make this community and city a better place.

I only knew Judy for a little more than a year. Others certainly knew her much longer, but I still learned from her.

The biggest lesson I took from Judy was about kindness and how not to be shy with it. She was always armed with kind words and sweet stories. She had a way of making people feel comfortable and better about themselves, even when she wasn't having the best of days. It was her love of people—all people—shining through.

One morning not too long ago she left this message on my Facebook wall:

"Drew - I adore that smiling face picture. I can be down in the dumps and notice that picture and it makes me grin. Thanks and thanks for all your hard work on Del Ray Patch."

If that doesn't make a guy's day, I don't know what will.

In my almost 30 years, I haven't met many people as quick and free with words so kind as Judy Lowe.

Like many others, I will miss her immensely. I will miss her perspective. I will miss the way she lit up the auditorium at DRCA meetings. I will miss her emails and her news tips, even the ones that sent me on wild goose chases. I will miss seeing the stuffed bear on her porch wearing a "Moran for Mayor" visor. And I will miss her laugh—a cackle so grand it could put all of Mt. Vernon Avenue at ease.

June 18, 2003, Congressional record, Jim Moran

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a leader and a friend in my district who has shown what one person can achieve through selfless dedication to her community. Judy Lowe, of Alexandria, Virginia, is an inspiration to all of us who wish to better the lives of the people around us.

This year, Judy was recognized by the Alexandria Commission on Women by honoring her with the Marguerite Payez Award. This lifetime achievement award is given to a woman who has devoted her life to benefit the City of Alexandria. I can not think of a person more deserving of this than Judy.

Judy Lowe has served as the ``Mayor" of Del Ray, a working class and diverse section of the City of Alexandria where I have spent most of my adult life. She has worked tirelessly to improve the Del Ray area through her volunteer work. Her service on the civic association executive board for 10 years helped shape Del Ray into the vibrant neighborhood that we know today. Judy authored the community newsletter during her time bringing the news to her friends and neighbors in a way that pulled the community together.

``Art on the Avenue" is one of the most impressive and valuable events that the City of Alexandria hosts, and it would never have been possible without the assistance and dedication of Judy. This annual event helps showcase the diversity of the city through multicultural art and music. Judy has ensured that this event improves each year and she should be commended for her commitment to showcasing the arts of our area.

Judy's involvement in a range of civic activities in Alexandria has endeared her to countless individuals and organizations throughout the area. Her passion for her community has never faded and she has always been one of the first people to step up and volunteer for an activity or an event.

Most importantly, Judy Lowe is a true leader whose magnanimous spirit is infectious. The words most often used to describe Judy are cheerful, dedicated, and role model. She is known not only for her dedication to Alexandria, but also her devotion to the Washington Redskins. She is the only person I know to wear black after every game the Redskins lose or to drive a maroon vehicle made to look like a Redskins helmet. She is passionate about everything in her life and we should all be fortunate to have a tenth of the energy she exerts.

Judy Lowe is the kind of person that makes our civil society function in a truly ``all-American way". She spent her professional career in service to her country with the Department of Defense. She will continue to serve our society in every positive way for the rest of what I trust will be a very long life.