



Pacific Palisades Community Council

2018 Awards Honorees

Five dedicated Palisadians will be honored at the PPCC annual Holiday Dinner and Awards Gala on December 13 at Gladstones Restaurant.

Jimmy Dunne and **Bob Harter** have received the distinct honor of being named Co-Citizens of the Year, following in the tradition of other Citizens over the past 71 years. Their vision, inspired leadership and hard work in advocating for the Veterans' Gardens at the Palisades Recreation Center for over four years has been nothing short of amazing. The story began in early 2014, when Jimmy brought the idea of renovating the dilapidated Upper Picnic area to the Park Advisory Board. The Board was enthusiastic, none more so than Bob, and Jimmy was asked initially to spearhead the creation of an inviting new Park venue that would feature a rejuvenated picnic area and bocce ball courts. Bob then stepped in to work side by side with Jimmy in the laborious process needed to turn the concept into reality. The two put in endless hours in meetings and discussions with the City, Rec and Parks and the Park Board, working on the project plan and the funding needed to keep the project moving toward the final Park Board recommendation. Working closely with American Legion Post 283, Jimmy and Bob secured the Post's commitment to donate up to \$400,000 as part of an \$800,000 fund still growing. Along the way, each of them demonstrated a passionate desire to serve our community through the creation of a place at the Park that would provide everyone – especially our senior citizens - an opportunity to gather together with friends and family. The entire story is told on a website Jimmy created for the project, <http://veteransgardens.net/>. Now called Veterans' Gardens, the project is slated to break ground soon, with completion scheduled for mid-2019.

In addition to this extraordinary effort on behalf of the community, Jimmy and Bob have each contributed volunteer service to the Palisades for many years. Bob has served a long stint as a member and leader of the Park Board and received Golden Sparkplug honors in 2014 for his work; he is also a long-time member of the Potrero Canyon Community Advisory Committee. Jimmy has been an active supporter of all things Palisades for several years, including creating and MC'ing many charitable fundraising events, especially those involving kids in Pacific Palisades. As an award-winning, multi-platinum songwriter, Jimmy recently composed a song dedicated to the community he loves, which we expect to feature at the December 13 Awards Gala! Citizen of the Year recognition in 2018 could not have been given to more deserving honorees than Jimmy and Bob.

John Steadman will receive a Golden Sparkplug Award for his ongoing, reliable and commendable voluntary work to clean and maintain numerous public areas of the community. John is a fifty-year resident and true unsung hero of the Via Mesa/Bluffs

neighborhood. Many neighbors know him as the guy who is always outside working on his own and others' gardens; most don't know just how extensive his work is. Early in the morning, before most Palisadians have awakened, he brings his own tools and supplies – including an edger, electric blower, trash bags and other implements -- to clean and tidy up portions of the neighborhood that can use loving care. He takes it upon himself to clean out trash and dead or overgrown shrubs from neighborhood street islands; he picks up palm fronds that fall onto Swarthmore during windstorms, neatly stacks and places them out of the way in the parkway, and calls the City for pick-up; he does the same on a regular basis on the landscaped slope on the Swarthmore side of Palisades Elementary, where he also installed a keyed hose outlet to assist with watering the area. He recently used his skills to build a tool shed and to install the new sign on the Village Green. He also regularly maintains the beloved park on the bluffs at the end of Via de las Olas, heading out early at least once a month to rake leaves, trim bushes, pick up trash, maintain the pathways and as necessary remove graffiti and repair and paint the fence. John is indeed an angel of the extended Via Mesa/Bluffs community and a worthy Golden Sparkplug honoree.

Dede Vlietstra has been selected as a Golden Sparkplug Honoree for her exceptional work in devising and following through with a plan to monitor, clean out and keep the dense park areas and bluffs along Temescal Canyon Road free of homeless encampments, trash and combustibles. Dede is a thirty-year resident who serves on the PP Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH) Enforcement Coordination and Volunteer Recruiting Committees. She was part of the original team that cleaned up thirty camps that lined both sides of Temescal in 2017. She is responsible for overseeing that area and when she saw camps returning in 2018, she actively engaged with homeless individuals, offered services, and cleaned out each new camp. She coordinates with PPTFH outreach workers as well as the LAPD beach patrol, and she also monitors Will Rogers Beach from Temescal north to the Bel Air Bay Club. Her strategy of finding camps, offering services and cleaning out encampments has greatly benefitted the community, in particular the residential neighborhoods on the bluffs above Temescal, by keeping the area safe and free of fire and litter. She has been described as a warm, vibrant, energetic and inspirational member of the community, with an unparalleled dedication to protecting our quality of life. Dede truly deserves Golden Sparkplug honors for her service as guardian of the parkland and bluffs along Temescal Canyon Road.

Last but not least, beloved community icon **Arnie Wishnick** will receive well-deserved Pride of the Palisades honors. Arnie has been a true Pride of the Palisades for over four decades, serving as Vice-President of two former Palisades Savings & Loan Associations for several years and then as Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce for 25 years; receiving a Golden Sparkplug award in 1980 and a Lion's Club Citizen of the Year award in 1984; and giving thousands of hours of his time as an active member and/or officer of numerous Palisades organizations, including the Village Green Committee, the Teen Contest Committee, PAPA, PRIDE and the Optimists Club. Arnie cares deeply about our community and has made many valuable contributions large and small – ranging from recruiting so many Honorary Mayors and 4th of July Parade Grand Marshals, to reviewing movies for the Palisadian Post for 12 years, recently co-producing the hit show "Bark! The Musical" at Theatre Palisades, and even taking responsibility year in and year out for the 4th of July porta potties! His knowledge of, enthusiasm for and commitment to the Palisades are second to none. We are very proud to bestow this special recognition upon Arnie this year.