



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

May 6, 2013

Representative Chris Garrett
Chair of the House Rules Committee
900 Court St, NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee:

Charles Jordan was Director of Portland Parks & Recreation for 14 years. During that time he brought 44 new parks and natural areas into our parks system. This parks system now has 200 parks so under Charles' leadership the number of parks increased fully 20%!

But Charles is not about places, he is about family. More than any other Director, Charles created a sense of family among the 450 full-time and 2500 part-time Parkies who worked for him.

Charles Jordan was awarded the Honorable Cornelius Pugsley medal in 1995. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding contributions to the promotion and development of public parks in the United States. In winning this award, Charles joined the likes of Lady Bird Johnson, Stuart Udall, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and the first Director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather.

Charles was certainly an advocate for parks, and the power they have to transform individuals, and then, collectively to transform communities. Charles often said about Parks & Recreation, "It's more than fun and games!" Charles knew something deeper was at work.

It was his passionate leadership that resulted in the amazing park system that Portland has today. It was his work that served as a foundation to Portland Parks & Recreation winning the National Gold Medal in 2011 as the best Parks and Recreation system in the Country.

Administration

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Charlie Hales, Mayor
Mike Abbate, Director

Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work and play.



Charles didn't just work on transforming parks and politics. He set about to transform the parks and recreation profession so that it better represented the community it served.

In 2001, he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Vermont. The citation for this award stated:

You spent the early part of your life in segregated, rural Texas, unable to enjoy the basic freedoms of your white peers. You once said that you could have been bitter, but instead you chose to be better. Indeed, you expanded this personal choice into a move toward changing the landscape of this country. You are a bold and visionary leader in the area of parks and recreation. You broadened the agenda of the environmental movement and land conservation to make it more inclusive to all members of our national community. You are nationally recognized for your refreshing and groundbreaking approach to putting people - particularly people of color - at the heart of the American conservation movement.

It is an honor to follow in the very large footsteps of this giant of a man, who showed us all what it is like to be a servant leader. He represents the very best in public service, and Portland Parks & Recreation enthusiastically supports this proclamation.

Sincerely,



Mike Abbate
Director