

Marv Kay – Member of Leadership Golden’s First Class - 1985

Marv Kay’s name is synonymous with Colorado School of Mines. He was born in Golden and lived in Ouray and Grand Junction before becoming an Oredigger. At Mines, Marv lettered in wrestling and football, and was named a Small College All-American. Graduating with an Engineering degree in 1963, Marv served two years in Germany as a first lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. No football there, so he joined the Heidelberg rugby club, which traveled across Europe and when back in Golden, Marv started the first rugby club in Colorado.

Also, upon his return in 1966, Marv became the Mines assistant football coach and swimming coach. Three years later in 1969 he was named the head football coach, a position he held for



24 years until 1994, when he was named Athletic Director. As Athletic Director, he headed not only varsity sports, but also recreational sports and the school’s mandatory physical education program. Under his leadership, the Mines athletic programs reached the top levels of Division II. Perhaps the most enduring symbol of Kay's influence is the stadium that bears his name – Marv Kay Stadium which opened in the fall of 2015. Go Orediggers!

In his “spare” time, Kay immersed himself in many civic organizations. While Football Coach and Athletic Director, Marv served on the Golden City Council for 12 years and was Mayor for eight of those years. In those capacities, Marv is widely credited with breathing new life into Golden.

While football coach and serving in his first term on the City Council, Marv and with a few like-minded individuals recognized the need to involve more residents in the fabric of Golden through an education and communications program. Denver had started Leadership Denver but it included a fee and was populated by members solely from the business community. Marv wanted Leadership Golden to be free and draw from a range of Golden residents. With an initial grant from Coors, the LG program was launched with sessions and meals. It was hard work starting from scratch but the City’s need for broader “grass roots” participation took root and has continued strong for 36 years.

Marv retired as Athletic Director in 2004, retaining the title of Emeritus Professor of Physical Education and Athletics. He was recognized by the Mines Faculty Senate in 2005 as a Distinguished Faculty Lecturer and also received the Mines Medal in 2003. He is in the Mines Athletic Hall of Fame, the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Hall of Fame, and the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame.

Marv and his wife, Diane, continue to support Golden and Leadership Golden. During his interview, he suggested getting younger Class members, including high school. At his suggestion, this year’s Class includes an applicant from Golden High School.

Leadership Golden thanks and celebrates, Marv Kay!

Marv Kay Notes: 28 August 2020 (Interview by RaQwin Young and Paul Haseman)

Marv and his wife, Diane, initially lived off Peery Parkway in north Golden and later near 24th and Illinois. Marv Kay was a founder of Leadership Golden 35 years ago in 1985. At that time Golden was under economic stress with many vacant buildings. While Mines football coach and serving in his first term on the City Council, Marv, along with a few like-minded residents, recognized a need to involve more residents in fabric of Golden through an education and communications program. Denver had started Leadership Denver but it included a fee and was populated by members solely from the business community. Marv wanted Leadership Golden to be free and draw from a range of Golden residents. With an initial grant from Coors, the LG program started with sessions and meals. It was hard work starting from scratch but the City's need for broader "grass roots" participation took root and has continued strong for 35 years.

Marv also wanted to involved younger residents in Leadership Golden and tried to imbue in them through the Program why involvement in the community was important. From the start, the primary objective of the Program was to foster future leaders in volunteer activities across Golden. Initially, the LG Board met on the back patio of Dave Shuey's restaurant, which is now the Sherpa House.

As a few historical insights, Marv felt that the turning point for resurrecting Golden was the passage of the City's first sales tax in _____. Prior tax initiatives, such as funding a new library had failed, but the sales tax barely passed by 11 votes. The ballot issue included funding for the Rec Center but after its construction, tax funding was then available for rejuvenating downtown Golden. This initiative was the City's lifesaver.

Also, Marv noted that the early Golden Volunteer Fire Department was mostly Coors employees obviously motivated to protect the brewery. At the time, Coors had a five-employee section dedicated to community relations with the community. Similarly, some City activities were less formal. While Marv was on Council, the City Manager, Chuck Gooch, struck a handshake deal with the Guenella family for water rights and construction of the Guenella Reservoir near Empire in Clear Creek County. These water rights have ensured Golden's water for 30 years.

Marv was enthusiastic about LG and sparked with insights and ideas, which included:

1. Involve more younger residents. (Young Professionals and High school?)
2. Over time, interests have changed. Be ready to change the session curriculum. Move beyond the "government" focus to areas of greater interest. He enjoyed water rights but did not care to spend so much time at the Golden Water Works.
3. Expand coverage on the actual history of Golden (to include the good and the not so good; e.g., KKK) in order to help attendees to be more "attached" to Golden.

This discussion with Marv generated ideas from RaQwin and Paul.

1. Ask LG class members to bring one friend to a session.
2. Ask businesses to encourage LG applicants from their employees.
3. As the next LG Class what interests them beyond just the post-session survey.
4. Add new sessions such as "Public Health."