

IT'S 2001...MEET THE NEIGHBORS

8) BARB N. O'NEILL (born: April 23, 1936 Harlem, New York)

Once when Barb was traveling across country, she ran out of funds and a stranger helped her out, saying, *"Don't pay me back, but do something nice for someone."* Then there was the time when Barb was a single working mom attending college, and she came home to find KKK painted all over her house and car. When her co-workers heard about the incident, they arrived the next day and helped Barb repair all the damage.



Steve Vento Photography

These pivotal events, plus Barb's feeling that *"For a while I was part of the problem, until I realized I could be part of the solution,"* led her down the road to becoming one of South Puget Sound's premier volunteers.

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But Barb's gatherings do more than feed the community. They offer a place for the lonely to gather and share stories. No one sits alone, and no child leaves who isn't clutching a holiday gift. Warm clothes are donated and ready for pick up, so the autumn night won't be so cold. Plus she gives volunteers something important to be part of. As one helper said, *"Barb is raising a generation of givers."*

Barb was on the Board of the Washington State Employees Credit Union, and has been active in Habitat For Humanity, Bread and Roses, Blacks in Government, and Barb's Family & Friends Furniture Bank.

The community honored Barb by naming her Grand Marshal of the 2003 Lakefair Parade, and giving her the "Living Legends Award" in 2004. Nationally she's listed in the 2004 Who's Who Executives & Professionals.

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There is a 3.5 acre piece of land in northeast Olympia that is the town's answer to the movie "Field of Dreams." The film offers the advice, "If you build it, they will come." and perhaps Art was listening, or maybe the movie producers were listening to Art. In any case, this Olympia original, and his wife Peggy, designed and planted an amazing rhododendron garden, and the people *have* come, for more than a quarter of a century, to stroll through the Zabel's backyard and enjoy this haven of natural beauty.



On Site Photo/Graphics #16820

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Art's childhood home was the first house outside the city limits, where Ralph's Thriftway now stands. Art remembers manning several fireworks stands in his front yard, including one that blew up!

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Art recalls serials that would leave you in suspense, and bring you back to the theater time after time to get the next exciting installment. The cost was 5 cents for kids, 15 cents for adults and 25 cents for loges. In the late 30s, when the Capitol and Liberty Theaters hosted the world premier of Tug Boat Annie (locally filmed), Art was there. He remembers lines stretching down to 4th Avenue, especially for Disney movies, and he takes pride in the fact that the Zabels gave free matinee tickets to children after every Pet Parade.

In the mid-fifties, the Zabels operated the Sunset Drive-In on the way to Shelton, and the Lacey Drive-In, where Fred Meyer now stands. Art made sure there was a children's play yard below both screens.

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A beautiful flower garden, a night at the movies, and the message to children that someone in Olympia cares, these are a few of Art's legacies.

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2) SHANNA BETH STEVENSON (born: Apr 26, 1949 Idaho Falls, Idaho)

In 1976 when Shanna came to Olympia with her young family, it quickly became apparent to the history community that an eager and energetic new booster had arrived. Inspired by her beloved parents' stories of the past, and fascinated by her history studies in college, Shanna set out to learn about the region's rich heritage and then help protect it.



Keith Eisner photo

In 1985 and 1986 Shanna took on the monumental task of conducting the first systematic Historic Resources Survey and Inventory of the City of Olympia and Thurston County. This enormous undertaking involved extensive footwork as well as paper work. With clipboard in hand, and a partner to do the surveys and photographs, Shanna combed city streets and alleys, country roads and farmer's fields, shorelines where Native American villages stood, as well as old neighborhoods with stories to tell, all in an effort to locate, describe and preserve what is historic in our community and the surrounding county.

She has authored, or collaborated on, numerous books and publications which have brought the past to life for the citizens of South Puget Sound. Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater: A Pictorial History, written by Shanna, is one of the most popular and frequently referenced regional history books. It has been published and republished since 1986. Shanna also wrote Olympiana, Port of Olympia--Superior Shipping Service, and was co-editor of Thurston County Place Names: A Heritage Guide.

In 1983 she was on the committee to draft one of Olympia's first historic preservation ordinances. She also worked with the group responsible for the renovation of the historic Bigelow House. We have a better understanding of the vital roles of women in local history thanks to an extensive study completed by Shanna. Since 1986, she has worked for the Thurston Regional Planning Council, serving as a staff liaison to the Heritage Commission. Shanna also logged in countless hours with a volunteer team to establish The Olympia Historical Society in 2001.

Her favorite spot in town is Sylvester Park, and her favorite history project was the restoration of the Emma Page fountain in that park.

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Her peers agree that today in Olympia's history community, one of the most commonly posed questions is *"Did you ask Shanna?"*

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Daniel was the grandson of Daniel R. Bigelow, one of Olympia's founding fathers, (See 1856 bio), and the son of George Bigelow who was also a leader in the capital city. All three of these men were lawyers, and lived part, or most of their lives in the historic Bigelow Home at 918 Glass Avenue N.E. in Olympia. Today, this landmark pioneer home has become one of the oldest still standing in the Northwest.



Olan Mills Photography

Daniel Sylvester's father George was a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan and the University of Washington Law School. He became a founding member of Capitol Savings and Loan, and in 1910, he was the coach of the Olympia High School football team. He served on the board of the YMCA during the time when the organization was constructing their first building on Franklin Street downtown.

Daniel Sylvester Bigelow was born in a house just up the hill from the historic home his grandfather built. In his early grade school years, Daniel would walk down the hill at 6:30 AM and take piano lessons from his Aunt Margaret, in the parlor of the famous old home. Daniel attended the old Washington School on the Eastside, where the Armory stands today, and he graduated from the second Olympia High School which stood on Capitol Way. After graduating from The College of the Pacific, where he played football, Daniel went on to study law, at the University of Washington, like his father. He also became a strong supporter of the YMCA, like his father. In 1960, the Bigelows were chosen "Family of the Year for Washington State" in the All America Family Search. Daniel had a long career as an attorney for the State and retired in 1978.

In 1935, Daniel and his bride, Mary Ann, made the important decision to live in the historic Bigelow House. In 2004, they celebrated their sixty-ninth wedding anniversary there. This civic-minded couple worked to preserve the famous home, and make it available for the whole community to enjoy. Daniel lived in, or spent time in, the historic home for almost every decade of the 1900s. Thanks to Daniel and Mary Ann's commitment, the restored Bigelow House was continuously lived in by the same family for a century and a half. It is the only Olympia history-based museum.

The Bigelow's "open door" tradition dates back to the hosting of Susan B. Anthony and the Mercer Girls. For decades, Daniel Sylvester stood at that open door, inviting the community onto the foundation of Olympia.

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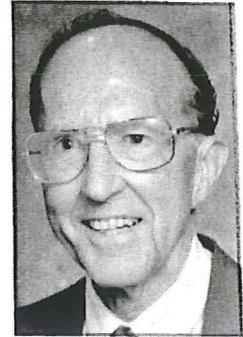
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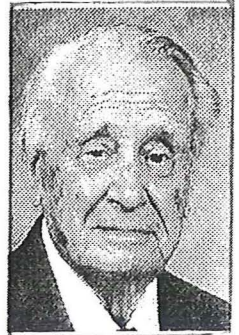
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4) MARY ANN CAMPBELL BIGELOW (Mar 13, 1913 Tumwater - Apr 9, 2005 Olympia)

Mary Ann was actually born Mary Alice, but in high school she played the part of Mary Ann in a theater production, and the name stuck. The Campbell Family moved a few times during Mary Ann's childhood, starting in Tumwater, and then living for a while at Useless Bay on Whidby Island. There she had fond memories of gathering driftwood during beach walks. This would later be the medium for her wood sculptures of faces.



Bigelow Family Collection

Mary Ann went to Broadview High School in Seattle, where this gregarious young woman was voted "Queen of Broadview". In that capacity, she took part in the ribbon cutting for the new Aurora Bridge.

While attending the University of Washington, Mary Ann met Daniel Bigelow at the Methodist Church. They were married in 1935 and moved back to Olympia, where they raised four boys in the historic Bigelow House. The home held a million happy memories for Mary Ann, with the exception of the first Christmas, when she had the mumps and was quarantined upstairs, while her loved ones sang carols below.

This South Sound native was an artist, wood carver, folksinger, public speaker, Sunday School teacher, and an avid historian for much of her life. She also carved on marble, painted in watercolor, played the zither and in her spare time, authored several books including: Where The Potholes Are, Is Your Child Ready For School?, and 100 Things To Do With Your Kids In Olympia. When people inevitably remarked, *"You're so talented. I could never do that."* Mary Ann would reply, *"I can't crochet a potholder...I can't fly a helicopter...Each person is different. When God made people, he broke the mold with each one. People need to be aware of their abilities and not downgrade themselves."*

For many years Mary Ann gave tours of the historic Bigelow Home, which were always "hands-on" experiences. She took pride in the fact that students were allowed to touch anything in the house, and nothing ever got damaged. Children always enjoyed Mary Ann's ghostly stories of the wicker chair that rocked on its own, and the closet door that shut itself.

Mary Ann once said, *"A good hard look backward gives you the strength to look forward...This area is rich in history. We're the southernmost terminus of the Alaskan Inside Passage. We're the northernmost point on the Oregon Trail. We have a beautiful setting...we must take care of the things that are around us."*

Mary Ann spent a lifetime doing just that.

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5) RALPH DAVIES MUNRO (born: June 25, 1943 Seattle, WA)

Although Ralph Munro grew up on Bainbridge Island, his Olympia roots go way back. Ralph's Scottish grandfather was a mason who worked on the State Capitol Building in the 1920s.

Today Ralph and his wife Karen have again put down roots in Olympia, at Triple Creek Farm on Mud Bay, where an amazing discovery was made in 1999. A summer excavation at their beach uncovered ancient artifacts dating back more than 500 years. In the spirit of good stewardship, the Munros opened the site up for study to the Squaxin Island Tribe and South Puget Sound Community College. Today archeological work continues, and the site known as Qwu?gwes has been further enhanced by a welcome pole, which is the Squaxin's way of thanking the Munros for reconnecting the tribe with their ancient village.

Since his graduation from Western Washington University in Education and Political Science, Ralph has taken an active role in education. He served as a special assistant to Governor Dan Evans on public school and college issues. In 1969, he became Washington's first volunteer coordinator. He established the Ralph Munro Endowment for Civic Education at Western. For many years, Ralph has volunteered at Olympia's McLane School where the principal nicknamed him "McLane's Guardian Angel." *"He gets speakers, interacts with students, plants trees with them, and bulbs in the spring, helped the kids design a rainwater-fed pond, and worked with students on a trail that runs behind the school."*

Ralph became the 13th Secretary of State in 1980, serving a record *five terms*, and finally retiring in 2001. During those years, one of his top priorities was to get more people to vote, and to make the voting process easier. Another of Ralph's goals was to improve trade and cultural ties with other countries. As Washington's ambassador of goodwill, Ralph traveled a great deal, especially to the Pacific Rim and Russian Far East. In 1998 the World Affairs Council presented Ralph with the World Citizen Award for his efforts to improve understanding between nations.

Today Ralph serves on the board of the Orca Conservancy, as well as the Squaxin Museum Board. He's a member of the McLane School Forest and Trails Committee, and was instrumental in creating the historic William Cannon Footpath on Mud Bay. In 2005 he was asked to work on the National Election Reform Commission. Whether the project is local or one of global proportions, Ralph Munro has shown us the value of staying involved.



Steve Vento Photography

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6) JANICE MARIE PUTNAM (born: Dec. 13, 1938 Ottumwa, Iowa)

When Jan was hired as the director of the Thurston County Food Bank in 1977, the number of employees was one (Jan). She started out serving about 30 families a month, with the help of 10 volunteers. When Jan retired, 27 years later, the roster of volunteers had swelled to nearly 400, and the Food Bank was feeding 1,800 families each month. What happened in-between involved a lot of team building, dedication and leadership, along with a dose of good humor, as the following story illustrates...



St. Peter Hospital Collection

Jan was in the office one day when a well dressed gentleman in a leather vest appeared and asked if the food bank would like to have an entire semi-truckload of strawberries. Jan happily accepted the berries and began distributing them to various needy groups in the community as well as anyone else who wanted them. Two weeks later, two men wearing suits came to the food bank and announced they were from the FBI and on the lookout for a man who stole a semi-truck full of strawberries. Jan positively identified the "donor," he was arrested, and the story became history until a month later, when the man turned up in line at the food bank for a meal!

Jan grew up in the Midwest. In 1961 she married her husband Dale, who worked first in New York with IBM and then in Minneapolis with the Hamm's Brewing Company. When the Olympia Brewery bought Hamms in 1975, the Putnam Family which included three children, Pam, Patrick and Perry, moved to Olympia. Jan, who had been very active in the PTA and numerous social service programs through her church, continued these volunteer activities in Olympia. Locals heard her tell about the "People Bank" that she had worked on in Minneapolis, and they urged her to take on the Food Bank directorship.

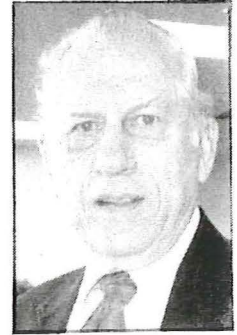
Jan has worked in and with many community outreach organizations such as Rotary, Providence St. Peter Hospital and the Chamber of Commerce. She has volunteered for countless school programs and many state-wide hunger task forces. In recognition of her selfless efforts, Jan received the Providence Health System Mother Joseph Award which is given to only one person each year and covers a multi-state region. In 2004, she was honored as one of the region's "Living Legends."

Down at 220 Thurston Avenue near the port, folks are donating food, while others are picking up a meal to get by. The shelves are stocked and the light is on, thanks to people like Jan Putnam.

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7) JAMES G. BROWN (born: January 3, 1924 Tumwater)

In 2003 the City of Tumwater paid tribute to a native son, by creating the Jim Brown Neighborhood Park. Located on Tumwater Hill, it is the first park in town to have a tennis court. The park stands where the city's public works shop used to be, and where Jim Brown worked for 19 years, before retiring in 1986 as Superintendent. But when speaking of Jim's contribution to Tumwater, his career is just part of the picture.



Brown Family Collection

As a lifelong Tumwater resident, Jim has been fascinated by local history since he was a teenager. Today, he is considered an authority on the town that was once known as "New Market." The Tumwater Parks Director explained, *"We jokingly refer to him as 'Mr. Tumwater'. If there's anything you want to know about Tumwater, or how something came to be, Jim Brown always knows the answer."*

Since the very first Tumwater Planning Commission in 1950, Jim has been involved in the community. In addition to his many years with public works, Jim served 17 years as a volunteer fire fighter, 24 years on the Tumwater School Board, and two terms on the Tumwater City Council.

"I took the job (Supt.) as a sort of personal crusade to do a whole lot of things I wanted to see done in the city. Particularly on Saturdays, I would drive around the city real slow on summer days when people were working in their yards and ask what they would like to see happen."

Jim's favorite project was to orchestrate the planting of over 500 flowering Japanese plum trees, throughout Tumwater, over a span of about fifteen years. Before that time, the streetscapes were mostly concrete and blacktop. Jim remembers, *"It was so nice to see flowering trees with pink blossoms in late March and early April when everything else was dull and drab."*

Jim was instrumental in preserving the Union Cemetery, where George Bush and many other early pioneers are buried. He was also very active in the first Tumwater Historical Commission meeting held in 1976. For years, Jim visited Tumwater classrooms with slides and narrations about interesting local people and events over a century and a half.

Every town needs leaders who listen to citizens, and then act on their behalf, as well as storytellers who remind us of days gone by. Jim Brown has been both of these to Tumwater...with a little Johnny Appleseed thrown in.

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9) GARY SAYE LOCKE (born: Jan. 21, 1950 Seattle, WA)

In 1950, when Gary Locke was born, his immigrant family lived in a public housing project in Seattle for World War II veterans like his father, James. Almost a half century later, in 1996, Gary became the first Chinese-American governor in U. S. history. Gary spent the years between these two dates, studying, working, entering politics, and developing his vision for the State of Washington.



Washington State Archives

As a young man, Gary worked at his father's grocery store, attained the rank of Eagle Scout, and graduated from Franklin High School with honors in 1968. Working part-time, and with the help of scholarships and financial aid, Gary received a degree in political science from Yale University. After graduating from Boston University Law School, Gary returned to the Northwest, and became a deputy prosecutor in King County for several years.

Gary won election to the Washington State House of Representatives in 1982. Eleven years later, the citizens of King County elected him chief executive. Gary set out to expand transit, cut the budget and develop a growth management plan for the state's most populated county.

In 1997, as governor, he signed a welfare reform bill, reducing the number of families on welfare by one third. He proposed a transportation plan to improve highways, and he promoted rural economic development. Gary also appointed an Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission to help schools struggling with test scores to improve. Gary created a scholarship program for high school students from working, middle class families, as well as the Washington Reading Corps.

During his two terms as governor, Gary and his wife Mona welcomed their two children, Emily and Dylan, into the world. As an Olympia family, the children attended public school, and enjoyed local events such as The Procession of the Species and Lakefair. Every Halloween, the entire family greeted trick-or-treaters at the Governor's Mansion, dressed as characters from The Wizard of Oz or Peter Pan.

As co-chair of the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston, Gary spoke of his grandfather who worked as a house boy in exchange for English lessons, in a home just one mile from the Governor's Mansion: *"My family jokes that it took them 100 years to travel one mile."*

Get to know Sam Fun Locke, one of Gary's ancestors, in the section titled "It's 1899...Meet the Neighbors."

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10) HOLLY ANNE GADBAW (born: Jan 11, 1946 Sparta, Wisconsin)

In 1982 Olympia changed its form of government from a three-member city commission to an elected, seven-member council-manager system. Holly helped spearhead this movement while serving as president of the Thurston County League of Women Voters. She became the chair of a group called "Olympians for Council-Manager." When the change took place, Holly began almost two decades of service to her community, as a city council member, and then from 1988 to 1990 as the second woman mayor in Olympia's history.



Steve Vento Photography

During the years that Holly occupied a seat in the circular city hall chambers on Plum Street, the downtown was revitalized by the opening of The Farmer's Market, Percival Landing, The Olympia Center and the Washington Center For the Performing Arts. It was also during these years that the Heritage Commission and the Arts Commission were formed.

As the former chair of The Thurston Regional Planning Council, Holly had a keen interest in how and where the city would grow. She was one of the authors of the growth management agreement which helped clarify where development should occur and where city services should be extended. She was also Olympia's representative on the LOTT Alliance, which provides sewage treatment to Olympia, Tumwater and Lacey.

In her methodical, soft-spoken manner, Holly helped steer Olympia towards a low income housing loan program, and a special utility rate for low income citizens, as well as the establishment of the Olympia Family Center. The capital city gained a nationally recognized curbside recycling program, and an environmentally sensitive lands ordinance, thanks, in part, to Holly's leadership.

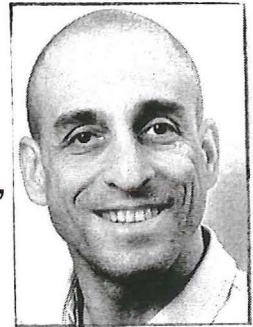
Along with running for office, Holly also set an example to locals as someone who ran for health. As a long-time member of the Olympia Rainrunners, Holly could be seen jogging around town, or participating in 10K races. She was one of the torch carriers during the relay that traveled through Olympia, on its way to the 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah.

After twelve years as a planner with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Holly is currently working as a member of the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board. Holly and her husband Jim have two grown sons and have lived for many years in an historic home in the South Capitol Neighborhood.

IT'S 2001...MEET THE NEIGHBORS

11) STEPHEN A. CHARAK (Apr 11, 1953 Chicago, IL - Dec 18, 2004 Olympia)

"As a child, when you're told you're good at something, and you get a check and can say you're a paid writer, it's phenomenal." Those were the words of a poetry contributor to Young Voices magazine, an Olympia publication designed to showcase and inspire budding young writers. For Steve Charak, the founder and editor of Young Voices, those words would surely have brought a smile.



Olympianphoto12-19-04

Steve came out west in his early twenties, after a childhood spent in Illinois. He arrived in Olympia to visit a friend who was studying at the newly-opened Evergreen State College. Evergreen's learning environment immediately impressed Steve and he soon enrolled in classes. He earned a bachelor's degree in Education, and then went on to teach at Mountain View Elementary School in Lacey for five years. Steve felt creative writing should be an important part of every child's education. The success he experienced with his own students spurred him on to reach out to a bigger audience of young writers.

In 1989, Steve left the classroom and created Young Voices, a non-profit, quarterly publication, that was written, illustrated and read by young people. For more than a decade he printed the poetry, short stories, art and photography of more than 3,000 students, ranging from the early grades through high school. Young people from all over the country heard about the magazine and submitted their work, receiving a small check as payment if their creative effort was printed.

Steve also reached over 1,000 South Sound students who attended his writer workshops for youth. In order to spark creativity, he encouraged kids to be spontaneous, to forget about outlines, spelling and punctuation, and just start writing. The polished version would come later.

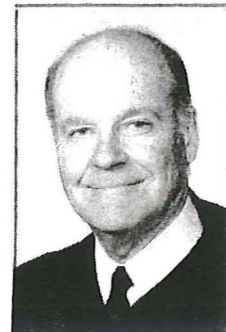
Steve authored a collection of short stories as well as a book about teaching children to write. In October of 2004, he was in the process of getting his masters degree through Antioch University, with the hopes of returning to schools to mentor teachers, when he was diagnosed with brain cancer. In the style of a true writer, Steve kept a journal of his experiences fighting the disease, but lost his battle two months later.

Steve's Young Voices project can be enjoyed at various Timberland Regional Libraries. Who knows what future authors might trace their start back to this publication, where they saw their work in print for the very first time.

IT'S 2001...MEET THE NEIGHBORS

12) GERRY LEE ALEXANDER (born April 28, 1936 Aberdeen, WA)

In 1954, when Gerry Alexander graduated from Olympia High School, it was located across the street from the Capitol Campus, and within sight of the stately Temple of Justice. Little did he know that his office would one day be in that historic building, or that 50 years later he would be recognized as the longest serving chief justice of the Supreme Court in Washington State history.



Cayle Fleber Photography

Gerry was born in Aberdeen, and moved to Olympia at the age of six. After high school, he attended the University of Washington and majored in history. This was followed by a stint as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and then a return to the U of W, to earn his law degree in 1964. From that time on, Gerry chose to settle in Olympia, working first in a private law firm for nine years, and then beginning his lengthy career as a judge. He was a superior court judge for Thurston and Mason Counties from 1973 to 1984, and then served on the Court of Appeals from 1985 through 1994. Gerry was first elected to the Supreme Court in 1994. His fellow judges elected him chief justice in January of 2001.

When not on the bench, Gerry pursues his interest in history and volunteers in many community organizations. He has been president of United Way, Lions Club, Olympia YMCA and the State Capital Historical Association. He also served as president of the Capital Marathon Association in the 1980s. Gary is a charter member of the recently-formed Olympia Historical Society, and is on the board of the Washington Courts Historical Society. In 2004, he was admitted into the Olympia High School Alumni Hall of Fame, and that summer, he passed by his old high school site in a convertible, as Grand Marshal of the traditional Lakefair Parade. (His daughter had been Lakefair Queen 20 years earlier.)

In December of 2004, Gerry convened and presided over an "historical court of justice." The purpose of this historic gathering was to discuss the exoneration of Chief Leschi, legendary leader of the Nisqually Tribe during the Indian War of 1855-56. After numerous testimonies, a seven member tribunal ruled that Leschi was a war combatant and should not have been charged with murder during war time. Gerry's leadership in this attempt to "set the record straight" was appreciated by historians and tribal members alike.

Whether working for fairness in our present judicial system, or helping to better understand our past, Gerry Alexander's contributions have made a difference across town, and across our state.

2001- IF YOU WERE THERE...



1. It is the day of the Nisqually earthquake and you own and operate a shop in downtown Olympia. How might the earthquake affect your business today and in the days and weeks ahead?
2. Public art has increased dramatically in Olympia. Which is your favorite? If you could contribute an idea for public art, what would it be and where in the city would you locate it?
3. Divide the class in half, where one side speaks about why Capitol Lake should stay as it is, and the other side tells why it should return to an estuary.
4. How are Arts Walk and the Procession of the Species different from the Fourth of July celebration Olympians enjoyed in 1899? How are they the same?
5. Should they have repaired the Emma Page fountain or just built another? Why?
6. Imagine that you are living in the new apartments above Starbucks facing Sylvester Park. What would it be like living downtown compared to where you live now?
7. Your out-of-town guests want to visit five of the most interesting attractions in and around Olympia. What will you take them to see?
8. In the 1930s, there were bowling alleys, movie theaters and a skating rink downtown. Is it important for downtown to have those today?
9. How has transportation changed? How would you change it further?
10. If you could design and run the first ever City of Olympia Museum what would the outside look like and what would you put in it?
11. Describe the buildings where most people gather in downtown Olympia. Do you like being in those buildings? Why or why not?
12. What are your suggestions for making Olympia an 18 hour city?