The City of Holland Mourns the Death of Former Mayor L.W. (Bill) Lamb

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Former Mayor L.W. (Bill) Lamb January 29, 2013, at Hospice of Holland. The City of Holland fondly remembers Lamb, a member of the City Council from 1967-1971 and Mayor from 1971 until 1973, as a man who cared deeply for his family and community. Lamb's funeral will be held on Saturday, February 2, 2013, at 11 a.m. at Hope Reformed Church, 77 West 11th Street, Holland, Michigan 49423.

Below is Lamb's official biography from the City's webpage:

L.W. (Bill) Lamb Jr. was born in South Haven, Michigan, on October 1924. He attended elementary school first in Jackson, then in Ganges, Michigan. In 1939, he moved to Holland, and graduated from Holland High School in 1942. After his graduation, Lamb spent forty-two months in the service as pilot in the Army Air Corps. Within that time, he also spent eighteen months in Europe, and two and one half years in college, including one year at Hope College.

In 1947, Lamb started to work with his father in his construction business, and later formed it into a partnership with his two brothers, Jack and Jim. Within the next year, Lamb married Elsie Elizabeth Parsons, of Hudson, New York. They had three sons: Larry, Ross, and Fred.

Lamb served on the building committee, and as a deacon and an elder at Hope Reformed Church. He became a member of the Maplewood school board and was appointed the president of the Michigan Road Builders Association in 1966. The next year, Lamb ran and was elected as Councilman of the Second Ward. In 1971, Lamb was elected as Holland's Mayor.

One of his first actions as mayor was to introduce himself to the supervisors of the area townships to focus on cooperation. He tried to get Hispanics and women involved in the local committees, and he addressed the issues of rebellious youths. In the era of the Vietnam War and the Kent State riots Mayor Lamb organized a basketball game between college professors and police officers to gain the respects of college students.

Although he only served one term as mayor, it was an extended term of 2 ½ years. This was due to a change in the election date from Spring to the Fall to better deal with financial issues and bring it inline with other elections.

Mayor Lamb instituted a one-way street system. Some residents had difficulty acclimating and even had to be taken to court. But this change enabled Seventh and Ninth Streets to handle the majority of the traffic and reserve

Eighth Street for commercial purposes. Lamb once said, "Can you imagine what Eighth Street would be like if all the trucks from Seventh and Ninth Streets were on it? Those were at one time going up and down Eighth Street. It was really a mess." Stoplights were also added on US-31 to allow traffic to flow more smoothly in an East/West fashion.

Many developments aided the welfare of the citizens and the city while Mr. Lamb was mayor and councilman. A badly needed new police building went up on 8th street. A water pipe connecting Holland City and Park Township was constructed parallel to the bridge on River St. This safety line ensured water to both sides of the river in case of an emergency. A $60,000 gift to the city was used to pay for the construction of Bouws Pool on Sixteenth Street and Fairbanks Avenue. Dial-a-ride taxi service was introduced as a cost-effective measure for public transportation as it was highly subsidized by the State. These improvements, among others stimulated the Holland economy and reversed the trend of decreasing property values downtown. In 1972, Princess Julianna of the Netherlands and her husband visited Holland, Michigan, and were entertained by the Mayor.

Under Mayor Lamb the city council underwent changes. The members decided to focus on agendas and planning for the future, rather than reacting to citizens needs. One initiative that began as part of this renewed sense of focus was the establishment of the Area Goals Committee which looked at the distant future of the greater Holland area in relation to decisions about land use, roads and pollution.

Web Links

L.W. (Bill) Lamb's Obituary

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