

12-31-1992

Bud Clark leaving office

Bud Clark

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PDX Portland



Oregon USA

You are cordially invited to join family, friends and colleagues as we celebrate Mayor Bud Clark's legacy to Portland and bid him a fond farewell on his final day in office as Mayor of the City of Portland.

A private farewell reception will be held:

Thursday, December 31, 1992

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Mayor's Office, Blue Room
(Room 303 City Hall)
1220 S.W. Fifth Avenue

(Public reception from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. will follow on the second floor of City Hall. At 12:30 p.m. there will be a public send-off on the 4th Street side of City Hall as the Mayor departs.)



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J.E. Bud Clark, Mayor

1220 S.W. 5th, Portland, Oregon 97204

December 31, 1992

A REPRISE OF THE CLARK ADMINISTRATION, by JE Bud Clark, Mayor, 1985-1992

To the citizens of Portland: THANK YOU for electing me your Mayor. It has been a unique experience.

Why I ran.

Ernie Bonner, David Kish, Gretchen Kafoury and Margaret Strachan all encouraged me to run for Mayor of the City of Portland. I owe them my thanks.

Why did I run for the office of Mayor? Basically, for three reasons: 1) I believed we were on the wrong course economically; we needed what I call economic "fire in the hole"; 2) government's attitude towards the citizens who paid the bills lacked compassion and the drive for long-term social change; and 3) I believed Frank Ivancie could be beaten and since no one else picked up the mantle of responsibility, I did. I found out later my winning did Frank a favor: he got an easier job for better pay!

What I'd like to do here is relate some of the things I found when I took office, what we did about them, and what they are like now. I was elected in May, 1984.

In the eight months before I took office I had a lot of "lead time" to get ready. I used it. Many people in the community were worried about having a tavern owner running their city. I began by meeting with business, community and City government leaders to reassure them about me, and to learn from them what they believed I should do.

The economy.

When you elected me Mayor in 1984, Portland and the whole state of Oregon was in a recession. Lumber mills were closing and agricultural products were not selling because of the high value of the dollar related to other currencies.

Early on, I met with Pat LaCrosse, Executive Director of the Portland Development Commission (PDC). He gave me a list of about 20 proposed projects for Portland, each of which might have economic benefit to the City. In the middle of the page was "convention center". One month later I announced my commitment to build the Oregon Convention Center because I believed it would be the "fire in the hole" we needed to drive our economic engine out of recession.

Five mayors who preceded me had tried, and failed, to build a convention center. By first building a region-wide coalition, we built a world-class convention center.

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I encouraged PDC to expand its role from urban renewal agency in the downtown area to include the entire region in business recruitment efforts. Together, we built Pioneer Place, which three of my predecessors had attempted unsuccessfully.

We bought historic Union Station, and the land around it, and the development plans are underway.

We negotiated with the Portland Trailblazers to build their new, \$170 million privately funded arena.

We created the Downtown Housing Preservation Partnership to aggressively restore single-room occupancy (SRO) housing in the downtown core, replacing 500 units of the 1400 lost to urban renewal.

Financial stability, awards.

When I took office the City had no rainy day reserve, no financial cushion whatever. My predecessor had spent the \$27 million reserve fund on day-to-day operating costs to make it look like we were ok when, in fact, we weren't.

Today, we have a \$21 million rainy day fund which we built up while cutting the cost of government and despite losing that much to the effects of Measure 5 in 1991 alone. The reserve fund is 10% of our annual General Fund budget.

The City of Portland has had the highest available credit rating (Moody's Aaa, Standard & Poors AA+) for a number of years; on my watch it stayed at the top.

Revenue projection used to vary widely. It was either much higher than actual receipts, leading people to believe we were crying wolf. Or, it was much lower than actual receipts, causing mid-year budget cuts, instability and uncertainty. Today, we come within 1.5% of actual receipts and the uncertainty is gone.

City Council adopted a conservative approach to spending. In fact, we have been criticized this year for not spending enough!

In spite of some reports you hear, Portland has very low per capita debt. The city only borrows money for capital projects and we always pay back the bonds. We also do very accurate long-range planning so that we anticipate problems and take care of them before they hurt us.

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Strong labor relations policies have eliminated the kind of arbitration award surprise I encountered in early 1985. We negotiated a cap on health care costs with all the unions, and a total compensation package to keep costs down.

Annexation has increased the City's tax base, spreading costs over more taxpayers.

Aggressive job development inside the City keeps jobs here, close to affordable housing, and increases business license revenue too.

Long range strategic planning helps anticipate and plan for the future needs of the City.

The City of Portland has received the following honors:

- *City and State* magazine, 1991 and 1992, ranked #5 in nation for excellence in financial planning
- *Financial World* magazine, 1991 and 1992, 3rd best financially managed city in the nation
- *US News and World Report*, 1992, 1 of 4 cities in the US most likely to weather the recession
- Government Finance Officers Association, "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" received every year since 1980 and "Budget Presentation Award" 1990, 1991, 1992

These awards are not accidents. They are they result of hard work by my staff and by the entire Office of Finance and Administration, headed by Steve Bauer.

When I arrived the budget was difficult to read and worse to understand; today, we put out a booklet call "Budget in Brief" which is readily understandable by citizens and bureaucrats alike.

Public safety.

When I took office, the residential burglary rate was among the nation's highest and our jails were full. Some of our neighborhoods held strong animosity towards police and considered them an "army of occupation" instead of the protectors of life and property.

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A labor union arbitration decision in February, 1985 gave police officers and fire fighters a retroactive 10% wage increase, which we had to begin paying immediately. We had no cushion to cover the unexpected cost. My first task in office was to cut the budget in mid-year to pay the extra wages ordered by the arbitrator. In order to pay the higher wages for police officers I had to lay off police officers at a time when crime was growing faster than the population and (though I didn't know then) we were about to experience the importation of gangs, gang violence and an explosion of drug-related crime from Southern California.

When I took office we didn't have enough police officers; after I had to lay some off we had even fewer. Worse, though, when we made arrests we couldn't detain the people we arrested, prosecute them, or keep them in jail to serve anything close to their full sentence. In short, our regional justice system was unable to cope with the problem and public confidence was disappearing fast.

Today, even *The Oregonian* admits our police are friendlier and our neighborhoods welcome Community Policing as a way to prevent problems from escalating to crime. Police Chief Tom Potter has committed himself and the entire police bureau to implementing Community Policing as quickly and as effectively as possible. A new Family Services Division will deal with domestic violence through intervention and referral to social service agencies to stop the cycle of community violence where it begins: in the home.

We have come a long way; we have a long way to go. I believe we are on the right track now.

Citizen confidence in government; accessibility to City Hall.

The attitude that "you can't fight City Hall" is still strong in many people's minds, but when I came to office it was pervasive. In my eight years as Mayor neighborhood associations have grown stronger. Neighbors have received training in land use and transportation planning so they can fight, and win their fights, against City Hall when they disagree with City policy or practice.

I invited the public in for brown bag lunches early on in my tenure. I have ridden my bicycle through every neighborhood in the City many times, and when I do, I stop to talk to my neighbors. The notes I make about those talks I gave to my staff with instructions to get answers. And they did.

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One idea we came up with, and I really wish we'd done this from the very beginning, was to hold a weekly news conference as part of a live cable television program. Members of the press attended, or watched from their newsrooms, and we featured good things that were happening in City government and around Portland. We won an award for one of our first programs.

As a guest on a talk radio program once a month, I answered questions from the public.

Throughout my administration we continued the Metro 7 cable television program each month, and people from all over Portland called in to ask questions and make comments.

Housing and homelessness.

Because the economy was ailing in 1985, families were breaking up for economic reasons: joblessness led to homelessness. People were becoming homeless in record numbers and many of these migrated to the largest city in Oregon: Portland.

My 12-point plan to end homelessness became a national model and spurred the restoration of lost single room occupancy (SRO) housing in downtown Portland, among other things.

When Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury joined City Council in 1991 I moved quickly to put all the bureaus that related to with housing in her charge and then directed her to develop and implement the Federally-mandated Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS). She has done this and more: she brought all the widely separated housing providers together into one information center. One-stop shopping for housing help, if you will.

Other awards we won:

In addition to awards for excellence in financial management and reporting, the City has won the following awards in my second term of office:

- US Conference of Mayors, "Most Liveable Cities Award", First Place, for excellence in the arts, June, 1988
- Rudy Breuner Award for Excellence in Urban Environment for 20 years of past and present success in City planning, 1989.

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I'd like to end this article with a quote from *Atlantic* magazine, November, 1992:

"Portlanders tend to have an almost small-town sense of responsibility for what goes on around them."

Portland continues to thrive, avoiding the fate that has befallen many other major central cities -- outmigration to the suburbs. The awards we received reinforce one of the Clark administration's guiding principles: Orchestrate the work of the city for the long-term good of the entire community."

When we started I told my staff it didn't matter who got the credit, but that we get the job done. I believe we have accomplished a lot, and for that I am grateful. There are things I wanted to do that didn't happen. On the whole, the ride was worth it.

Thank you, Portland, for allowing me to be your Mayor. I am turning over the reins to Mayor-elect Vera Katz with the City in much better shape than when I inherited it. I wish her, and the citizens of Portland, well.

This is the text of what was to be the last *Mayor's News Briefs*. I have reformatted it into normal text for those who requested it. RJC