

Concept:

Joseph C. Dawidziak Parkette

Public Amenities meeting on 7/9/25 voted:

“Recommend to the council to name a park in honor
Joseph ‘Joe’ Carl Dawidziak”



Administrative Report

L.2., File # PA25-0992

Meeting Date: 7/9/2025

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL TO NAME A PARK
IN HONOR OF JOSEPH "JOE" CARL DAWIDZIAK

Joe Dawidziak

1946-2025

“I have been involved in public service my entire life.”

Service to the Country

Joe enlisted in the U.S. Marines. After being stationed in Washington, D.C., he transferred to serve a combat tour in Vietnam. After separating from active duty in 1968, he served with distinction for over three decades in the Marine Corps Reserve. He retired in 2003 with the rank of CW4. Chief Warrant Officer 4 is one of the highest ranked of all the enlisted personnel.

Joe served in Vietnam in multiple overseas tours in at least 5 of 7 continents. He also served in Kosovo working with NATO. A few highlights:

- He worked the Presidential detail and protected Lyndon B. Johnson
- He was a part of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Units, was a Parachutist, was a Rifleman, was a Radioman; all before being promoted to Chief Warrant Officer and finished his Military Career in Intelligence post 9/11.

Some highlights:

- Vietnam Campaign Medal
- National Defense Service Medalx4
- Vietnamese Service Medal
- Presidential Unit Citation
- Armed Forces Reserve Medal
- Kosovo Campaign Medal
- NATO Medalx2
- Armed Forces Expeditionary Medalx2
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Joint Service Achievement Medalx2
- Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon

Presidential Unit Medal: This is the equivalent of the Navy Cross and is only given when authorized by the President. The Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) for the US Marine Corps is one of the highest-level awards recognizing extraordinary heroism in action against an armed

enemy for displaying gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps that sets them apart from other units. It is one of the most prestigious medals outside of the Navy Cross and Medal of Honor and only issued by the US President. No one actually knew he got this until we found his records. He never spoke of it.

It is further worth noting, he was involved in an incident where his company reported that he personally went back into enemy fire to save the life of another Marine after being wounded.

Service to the Community

While still in the Marine Corp Reserves, in 1974 Joe graduated from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Academy and served the community as a Deputy Sheriff and was an investigator in the Los Angeles County Public Defender's office.

Service to Redondo Beach

In 1993, Joe was elected as the District 1 Representative on the Redondo Beach City Council. Recently, he found himself in service again on the City's Charter Review Committee, which resulted in successful changes to our City's governing documents.

Some highlights during his time of service:

- Joe was a part of the revitalization of the Redondo Beach Pier area, he even was a part of trying to get an investment from Disneyland when he courted them to consider an investment. He was also actively involved in the "Rescue our Waterfront" effort.
- Joe lobbied for and sat on the Metro commission and sat on the board ensuring Redondo received adequate and lobbying for additional access to public transportation.
- Joe was very involved in supporting (of all things) Theatre, advocating and supporting the Redondo theatre.
- Joe served in the Southern California Association of Governments; he also worked to help get a strategy to introduce high speed internet into the area as part of the Telecommunications Deployment Strategy. His work helped move the internet forward in Redondo Beach.

A Family Affair...

Claire and her husband have moved back to Redondo to live in the house Joe built with Joe's wife Ann. Claire played AYSO soccer in the local area, did Dance and Theatre in the same theatres, studied in the same libraries, and worked for Parks and Rec. There is nothing more meaningful and they return to the legacy that Joe built with the hope to contribute to the city in his memory.

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." John F. Kennedy -- there is no greater gift than a legacy that drives others to service. We hope this effort can share this message and drive others to serve their local area and Nation.

On Local Government: Redondo Councilmember Dawidziak saved library

👤 Special Contributor 📅 June 9, 2025



by Bob Pinzler

"He was an honorable man." Shakespeare had Marc Antony damn Brutus with such faint praise. However, Joe Dawidziak was someone who not only embraced the concept but lived it and lived it well.

I first met Joe when we were elected to the Redondo Beach City Council in 1993. We had beaten incumbents. (Yes, it is possible.) Neither of us was expected to win.

There was little we agreed upon politically on a national scale, but we found common ground on local issues. We both became involved in regional government through the Southern California Association of Governments (with the unfortunate acronym: SCAG.) We came to see local issues through a different prism. And when a problem arose that we could work on together, we did.

In the mid-1990s, our area suffered a severe recession after we dared to win the Cold War. Aerospace contracts dried up, dramatically affecting the local economy. The City Manager at the time saw an opportunity to “repurpose” a City property on Artesia Boulevard called the David Hayward Center. It was a neglected meeting room building with a small branch of the City library attached to it. The City Manager had been squeezing that branch dry to make it more palatable for its closure, perhaps making the property available for sale to gain instant revenue.

During those days, the divide between north and south in Redondo was even more vituperative than it is now. There was even a serious secession movement in its infancy.

Marilyn White and I, the two councilmembers from the north, wanted to save the branch, but we needed a third vote. Joe not only raised his hand but also found a means to pay for it.

At that time, there was very little access to the Internet in people’s homes. A few libraries provided access at speeds that would now be considered outrageously unacceptable, but were exceptional then. Joe figured out that the State would provide funds if a city could prove it was saving “vehicle miles traveled.” He determined how many miles it would take for North Redondo residents to drive to the newly opened main branch near City Hall. Along with the help of Assemblywoman Debra Bowen’s office, the City obtained a grant to install two computers in the North Branch based on that calculation.

Suddenly, there were lines out the door. The branch was not only saved, but a new City Manager who loved libraries, Lou Garcia, started the process of creating the new building we have today. It wouldn’t have happened without Joe, a Council member for the District farthest from the North Branch.

I knew Joe for over 30 years. We recently served on the Charter Review Committee and enjoyed it very much. No one has cared as much about this City as he did.

This honorable man will be sorely missed.

7/3/25, 10:27 AM

On Local Government: Redondo Councilmember Dawidziak saved library - Easy Reader & Peninsula Magazine

Dawidziak passed away last month, at age 78. The Redondo Beach City Council adjourned in his memory at its Tuesday, June 10 meeting. ER

Personal Recommendation:

Name a portion of the General Homer O. Eaton, Jr. Parkette in District 4. (There is a portion facing Harriman Lane and a portion facing Huntington Lane and a tall block wall separating them)

History of the General Eaton Parkette

Prior to 1973, the space occupied by the two Eaton Parkettes were drainage sumps

On January 8, 1973, the City Council approved the naming of eight former sumps as seven parkettes, namely: the Andrews Parkette, the Huntington Parkette, the General Eaton Parkette, the Beverly Parkette, the Fulton Parkette, the Cluster Parkette, and the Townsend Parkette. Beverly and Townsend Parkettes were named after two members of the State Legislature that were “instrumental in securing state and federal funding for the development of parks and neighborhood parkettes.” In the motion that named the parkettes, it was noted that the two Eaton Parkettes was actually one parkette because it was “back-to-back.”

If you visit the Eaton Parkette today, you will see that they are not back-to-back and have homes behind and to the sides of the Huntington and the Harriman facing spaces. Each has their own separate entrance and walls surrounding the back and sides of the park. Thus, they function as two separate parkettes and makes General Eaton the only person honored in Redondo Beach with two parkettes. The house behind the Harriman facing parkette was, according to Redfin, built in 2001. The lot behind the Huntington facing parkette was, according to Redfin, built in 1999. The City has referred to the Eaton Parkette as General Eaton A and General Eaton B.

About General Eaton

Redondo Beach City Council Res. 5114 stated that Major General Eaton served in the U.S. Army, was a resident of Redondo Beach, served as a vice-principal at Hamilton High in Los Angeles, and “was a guiding factor in the infancy of the California ROTC program.” The resolution also cites his involvement in the Korean conflict, his leadership with the 40th Armored Division of the California National Guard, his receipt of Presidential Unit citations, and his being personally decorated by General Douglas MacArthur. He is likely the highest ranked military officer that has roots to Redondo Beach.

General Eaton was born in Ohio on July 18, 1902. According to articles in the Daily Breeze, General Eaton’s military career started in 1921, as a private. He was commissioned in 1924 after he graduated from Pomona College and completed an ROTC course. During World War II, he was called up as a company commander of the Los Angeles regiment, served as a battalion commander, and executive officer of the regiment on Guadalcanal and New Britain in the Pacific Theater.

General Eaton was “awarded the Silver Star for heroism in action during the crossing of the Pasing River during World War II. He also commanded troops in the Korean conflict and the local National Guard Unit from 1953-1958 . He lived his last fifteen years in Redondo Beach and died in 1979.