

Linn County plants redwood tree to honor former Commissioner John Lindsey

ALBANY — Former Linn County Commissioner John Lindsey was an outspoken advocate for his family, the citizens of Linn County and small business owners, fellow elected officials, coworkers and family members said Tuesday morning as a redwood tree was planted in his honor on the courthouse lawn.

“John had lots to say and he said it ...”

Commissioner Roger Nyquist

It would have been Lindsey’s 55th birthday, 22 of those years spent as a county commissioner. Lindsey died March 9 after a year-long battle with cancer.

“John had lots to say and he said it,” Board Chair Roger Nyquist said.

Nyquist said that shortly after being elected to office in November 1998, the Democrat-Herald predicted Lindsey would be an important decision maker of the next century.

“They weren’t far off the mark,” Nyquist said.

Nyquist said Lindsey was adamant about individual liberty and freedom, providing value for taxpayers and never “kowtowing” to the political whims of the moment.

Nyquist said Lindsey foretold the county’s eventual \$1 billion class action lawsuit against the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Lindsey was the county’s representative on timber committees. Nearly 20 years ago, he told his fellow commissioners the Oregon Department of Forestry was not living up to its contracts concerning management of nearly 700,000 acres of timber that makes up the state forest system.

Those lands had been turned over to the state with an expectation of a steady annual income derived from managed timber harvesting.

In 2019, Linn County and nearly 40 other taxing districts won the lawsuit in Linn County Circuit Court, although it is being appealed.

Nyquist called Lindsey, “a great guy to work with ... he left us way too soon. I’m sure he is here today in spirit and in memories. He was definitely the tree guy.”

Commissioner Will Tucker served with Lindsey for a dozen years, retired and was appointed to fill out the remaining two years on Lindsey’s term of office.

“John would have been extremely interested to know that private timber companies have salvaged about 50% of their burned trees from last September’s wildfires while the BLM has only cleared rights-of-way and roadways,” Tucker said.

Tucker presented Lindsey’s widow, Linda, with a plaque in his honor.

Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger said there has been a huge outpouring of heartfelt comments about Lindsey from people all around the state.

“John’s passing has had a significant impact all over the state, not just in Linn County,” Sprenger said.

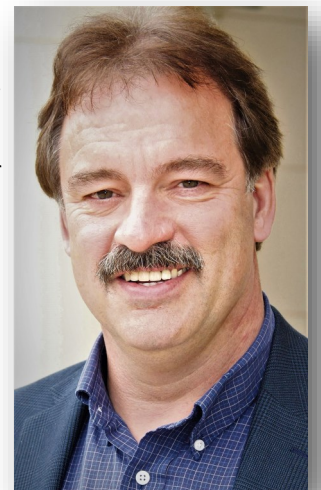
Linn County Clerk Steve Druckenmiller and Lind-



Above: Linda Lindsey with Commissioners Sherrie Sprenger, Roger Nyquist and Will Tucker.



Left: Commissioner Tucker presented Linda Lindsey with a plaque honoring her husband John’s 22 years service to the county.



John Lindsey

Below: Linn County Clerk Steve Druckenmiller talks about his dear friend John Lindsey.



sey were not only fellow elected officials, but dear friends for many years.

“He had a huge heart,” Druckenmiller said. “He loved Linn County and he loved people. Everything he did he did with his heart in it.”

Druckenmiller said he might well have been Lindsey’s toughest critic. They would discuss and hash out Lindsey’s thoughts on issues and Druckenmiller would remind Lindsey he was but one of three votes.



Linn County Commissioner and Board Chairman Roger Nyquist talks about his former fellow Commissioner John Lindsey during a tree planting ceremony in Lindsey's honor Tuesday morning.

“He would always say it is a great board of commissioners and there was never animosity about issues,” Druckenmiller said. “They would tackle something and then move on to whatever the next issue was waiting.”

Ralph Wyatt was the Linn County Administrative Officer for more than 28 years.

“He could be frustrating, but I always told people to get on John’s train and ride it to the station, that’s when everything would become clear,” Wyatt said.

Wyatt called Lindsey, “a smart guy who was dedicated to Linn County and the citizens of Linn

County. He really cared.”

Senior administrative assistant Marsha Meyer said she and fellow administrative assistant Heather Gravelle, “Miss his laugh and smile. He always lifted up the office and we miss him.”

Linda Lindsey said she “adored” her husband.

“I feel so honored for this to happen for John,” she said. “It’s going to be so much fun to watch this tree grow. Everyone misses him so much.”

The tree was planted on the north side of the courthouse and can be easily seen through the window in Lindsey’s former office.

Lindsey was serving his sixth four-year term as a county commissioner.

Lindsey served in the U.S. Navy during Operation Desert Storm and was a staunch advocate for veterans.

He enjoyed playing and listening to music and anything to do with his children and grandchildren.

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Former Linn County Commissioner John Lindsey’s widow, Linda Lindsey, places a shovel full of dirt around a newly-planted redwood tree on the courthouse lawn Tuesday morning.