

Philip Wasden – Outstanding Lehi Citizen – November 2013



Mayor Bert Wilson has chosen Philip Wasden as the November 2013 Outstanding Lehi Citizen. This award is reserved for Lehi citizens who have made a significant effort to make Lehi a better place or performed some other noble feat. To commemorate this achievement, Phil was awarded a plaque at the November 19 City Council meeting.

Phil moved to Lehi 10 years ago and since that time has been a constant figure at the Lehi Legacy Center. At 76 years young, Phil's fitness routine rivals most people's one-third his age. Phil's 6:00AM routine begins with a 5 mile brisk walk. He then shoots 100 free throws, goes for a swim, and relaxes in the hot tub. In all the years he's been doing this he's, "made some good friends.

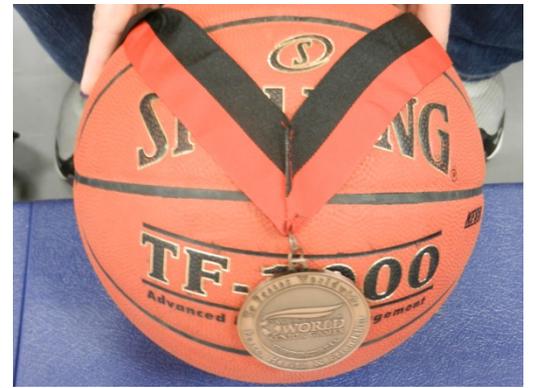
I find someone to walk with, get acquainted, and together we solve the world problems as we go." said Phil.

Fitness including football, track, and basketball has always been a part of Phil's life. For seven years he has competed professionally in the Free Throw and 3 Point competition in the Huntsman World Senior Games at the Washington Rec Center in St. George, Utah. Participants for the Games come from all over the world and it is a competitive, yet supportive atmosphere. In 2013, over 10,000 athletes competed from all 50 states and 21 countries. In the seven years he has been competing, Phil has placed fourth four times and

in 2011 and again in 2013 Phil placed third and earned a bronze medal. This year Phil set a personal best when he made 24 of his 25 free-throws and 4 of his 6 three-point shots for a total of 36 points. Phil's previous best had been 34. Deviating from the typical one-handed shot, Phil shoots with two hands. When he was learning to play, he was trained to shoot with both hands, instead of one. In fact his coach made him run if he didn't. Phil's record for the most baskets made in a row is an impressive 114.



Phil's performance in the Huntsman games this year earned him a spot in the Wilson Free-Throw competition. There, he won second place and earned a new Wilson basketball. Despite his already amazing achievements, Phil's not done yet. He's already training for next year's Huntsman Games and looks forward to one day bringing home the gold.



Not only is Phil an amazing athlete, but he is a truly caring person as well. After spending nearly every morning in the Legacy Center for 10 years, he has befriended everyone there and knows many of the regulars by name including patrons, custodians, front desk staff, instructors, and directors.



Phil's proudest achievement is his family. He and his late wife Joyce had six children together. "All of our children have gone to college, four have served missions [for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints]. I have 22 grandchildren and 9 Eagle Scouts in my family." Phil's children are all scattered throughout the United States, and Phil regularly visits each of them.

The thing Phil loves to talk about the most is his wife Joyce who he calls, "the love of my life." Joyce and Phil grew up on either side of Yellowstone National Park.

They met when Phil was stationed in the Air Force which he served in for six years during the Vietnam War. Despite everything Phil experienced in his life, the most frightening thing he ever did was ask Joyce's father for permission to marry his daughter. Once he overcame that obstacle, Phil and Joyce were married June 7, 1960 in the Idaho Falls Temple. Joyce graduated from the University of North Dakota and played semi-pro softball.

They were married for almost 42 years and Phil misses her every day. Joyce passed away on September 5, 2001 after a battle with uterine cancer. Up to the end, Joyce was completely selfless and never complained. When they learned of her condition, Phil retired from his job to take care of her. When he came home and told her what he'd done, she told him to, "Go find another job. You can't do anything for me. You need to take care of you." Before she passed away, Joyce took the time to organize her obituary, funeral service, and even pick out

her casket. She didn't want her family to go through that stress once she was gone. Joyce also took the time to buy Phil a massive supply of clothes and toiletries so that he wouldn't have to do it himself for many years. In a final special act remnant of the movie *PS I Love You*, Joyce prepared special gifts for Phil to receive once she passed away. Phil only opened the gifts on special occasions, about 9 a year and it took him over 5 years to open all of the gifts. One of the most special gifts he received from Joyce is a red sweatshirt with a white heart on it that reads 'I Love You More'.

Joyce made Phil promise a few things before she passed away, one of those promises was that he would not become a recluse. To keep that promise, Phil has filled his life not only with exercise, but also with philanthropy. Phil believes that, "Service is the key to being happy." He is a member of the Sons of the Utah Pioneers, volunteers at Thanksgiving Point, and has served in the Mount Timpanogos Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Phil is also a board member of Protecting Our Guardians, a family military advocacy group. Phil also sings in the Utah Choral Arts Society. As a part of his membership with the choir, he has had the opportunity to travel the United States and the World. On one special occasion, the choir traveled to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier where Phil was asked to assist in placing a wreath at the monument. Because of all of his service, in 2007 Phil received the Utah Philanthropy Heart and Hands award from the State of Utah.



Phil is ever optimistic and is rarely seen without a smile. "I have been blessed physical and mentally, but really it's a matter of choice....You can choose to be happy or choose to be sad." One of the sayings Phil is famous for is "Make it a great day." Not have a great day, but make it one. "Through it all, I maintain that life is good and the best is yet to come!"

If you know Phil, you've likely heard him say, "I love you more." Those were the last words Joyce said to him before she passed away and it is now how Phil says goodbye. "I never want to get caught in a situation where I say 'I wish I would have..... I wish I could have....' I always want the people I care about to know that [I care] and hear that before I check out." So on behalf of Phil to everyone reading this, I love your more.

Thank you Phil for being a great example to all of us. We applaud your efforts in representing Lehi at the Huntsman Games and appreciate the service you provide and the care you show to everyone you meet. You truly make Lehi a better place to live.

Do you know someone you believe is worthy of this award? Nominate them by going to Lehi-ut.gov -> Residents-> Outstanding Lehi Citizen Award.