



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Zack Earp to be Recognized with City Spirit Award on June 30

Retired educator is longtime advocate for veterans and students in the Alvord Unified School District

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Zack Earp, a Marine Corps veteran who has spent the past five decades advocating on behalf of fellow veterans and children within the Alvord Unified School District, will be recognized by the Riverside City Council with the 2019 City Spirit Award on June 30 during a Council meeting at Riverside City Hall.

The annual City Spirit Award recognizes a Riverside resident who, by extraordinary deeds and community spirit, demonstrates good citizenship and dedication to enhancing the quality of life in the City of Riverside.

“Zack Earp is a legend in the La Sierra community for his service to his community,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “His work on veterans’ issues and in education make him well qualified for the City Spirit Award.”

Earp worked as head box boy at a Stater Brothers Market before serving in the United States Marine Corps from 1967-69, at which time he was medically retired. When he returned to Riverside, he began his career in education.

Earp spent the next three decades in a variety of posts in the Alvord Unified School District before retiring in 1993. He was a campus supervisor, instructional aide, bus driver, special education and alternative education teacher, then principal at Arlanza Elementary and Arizona Middle schools.

He was an elected trustee of the Alvord Unified School District from 1995-2007. The K.R. Zack Earp Stadium at Norte Vista High School was dedicated in 2013.

Earp currently serves as the president of the Alvord Educational Foundation; facilitates the Riverside Parkinson’s Support Group; serves as a member of the Salute to Veterans Parade Committee; and contributes to a veterans blog called Agent Orange Zone for people who, like himself, have suffered health problems from exposure to the defoliant used in the Vietnam War.

Earp is well-known in the area for his work on veterans' issues, having served on the Mayor's Veterans Taskforce, worked as an advocate for veterans, spoken with high school students about the challenges faced by veterans, and served as a guest speaker at events related to veterans.

He is a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America – Chapter 47, and chaired its Agent Orange Committee, while also serving in leadership posts of several local, state and national chapters of the VVA; is a member of the Military Order of Purple Hearts, and the Disabled American Veterans – Charlotte W. Fay Chapter 28.

Earp served 12 years as member then chairman of the Riverside County Supervisors Veterans Advisory Committee; was the keynote speaker at the Memorial Day services at Riverside National Cemetery in 1997; and has presented on veterans' issues at elementary, middle and high schools, as well as at colleges and universities.

He served as a member of the fundraising committee for the Ysmael Villegas Memorial Veterans Statue in 1995 and was chair of the Ysmael Villegas Memorial Fund Scholarship Committee. He also served on the Riverside Mayor's Police Use of Force Committee.

“Zack Earp's commitment to Riverside, to veterans, and to students in Alvord Unified is unparalleled,” City Councilmember Jim Perry said. “He has made a lasting impact on our city with his selfless devotion to service.”

Earp was named Humanitarian of the Year by the Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Association 2014; received the Raincross Group Leadership Award in 2011; was made a member of the Riverside County Office of Education's Educational Hall of Fame in 2010; inducted into the Norte Vista High School Hall of Fame in 1996; received the J.C. Penny Golden Rule Volunteer of the Year in 1995; was Principal of the Year in the Alvord Unified School District in 1991; was named Inland Empire Veteran of the Year in 1988; was recognized as Teacher of the Year in Loma Vista Middle School in 1982; and has frequently spoken up in the media for veterans and students since 1984.

Past City Spirit Award recipients are Dickey DeLoss (1995), Rich Biber (1996), Michael Goldware (1997), Rose Mayes (1998), Rita Norton (1999), Vic Miceli (2000), Daniel Hantman (2001), William F. Gavitt (2002), Dell Roberts (2003), Brigadier General Stan Brown (2004), Dr. James H. Erickson (2005), Natividad Fuentes (2006), Damon Castillo (2007), Sam Huang (2008), Cindy Roth (2009), Kathy Allavie (2010), Jane Block (2011), Stan Morrison (2012), Debbi Guthrie (2013), Gordon Bourns (2014), Anthony Rivera (2015), Henry Coil, Jr. (2016), Ruben and Diana Ayala (2017) and Brian Jaramillo (2018).

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