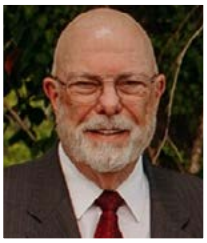
Oregon State Capitol FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025



A Message from the Chair

By Hon. Gary Wilhelms

As I begin my term as Board chair, I thank the previous chairs and Board members for their service and, with the help of our supporters, for growing the Capitol Foundation into the successful nonprofit it has become. I am excited and optimistic, not only about the next two years, but about our future beyond that. As our list of supporters grows, so does our list of projects, and that's good! That's the way it's supposed to work. We welcome new proposals.

It is my hope that in the coming months we will increase the Capitol Foundation's public visibility. We need Oregonians to become more aware of what the Capitol Foundation is and the good it is able to do with their support—financial support from our donors, from those who purchase Oregon's Pacific Wonderland license plates and from the Capitol Club and, also, the administrative support and cooperation we receive from the Legislative Assembly.

I am excited to announce that Senate President Rob Wagner has been appointed to the Capitol Foundation Board, effective February 7. We look forward to his valuable input and collaboration in this new role.

As renovations on the Capitol continue, much of the building remains closed. The Capitol Foundation will alert you to the Capitol's full reopening and related events expected in 2026.

Thanks. And please stay tuned for more good stuff from your Oregon State Capitol Foundation!

Celebrate the Beginning of Spring

The Capitol Foundation is proud to sponsor Cherry Blossom Day at the Capitol and Yozakura. Cherry Blossom Day is Saturday, March 15 and takes place at the Capitol Mall from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is a free, family-friendly event with activities and performances. Oregon Parks and Recreation Department hosts Yozakura (nighttime lighting of the cherry blossom trees) and runs nightly March 15-31.

Pictured left: Yozakura, Kimono fashion and musical performers at Cherry Blossom Day—State Capitol State Park, 2024.
Photos by: Joel Zak

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Civics Education Initiative Awards go to Nine Oregon Nonprofit Organizations

Foundations for a Better Oregon—2023 Legislative Summit. Photo by: Yvanna Ramos

The Capitol Foundation awarded nearly $120,000 in the fourth round to the Boys and Girls Club of Salem - Marion and Polk Counties, Civics Learning Project, East County Rising Community Projects, Foundations for a Better Oregon, Oregon Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, Oregon Boys State, PSU Center for Women's Leadership, YMCA Youth and Government and Young Leaders Program.

"The awards will provide hands-on experiences for students and other Oregonians to learn how democratic governments make decisions and — most importantly — how to be an effective participant," —Gary Wilhelms, Board chair

Applications for round five will be accepted online starting July 1 through September 30. Visit OregonCapitolFoundation.org for more details and to apply.

New Oral Histories Available Online

Hear the history of the Capitol from those who worked there by listening to our interviews with former joint Speakers of the House Arnie Roblan and Bruce Hanna, former Speaker Larry Campbell, Capitol staff Herb Colomb and Frankie Bell, Sculptor of the November Sprinter *(located on the State Street side of the Capitol)* Tom Morandi, former Senate President Pro Tempore Mae Yih and lobbyist Dick Tobiason.

You can view the Oral Histories on the Oregon State Capitol YouTube Channel—scan the QR code to the right, as well as on the Capitol Foundation's website at: OregonCapitolFoundation.org/project/oral-history-project/

Capitol History Gateway Exhibits Coming to the Capitol in 2025

The Capitol Foundation sponsors exhibits through the Capitol History Gateway Exhibit Sponsorship Program. Five exhibits have been scheduled at the Capitol and will be open to the public starting in September.

Current sponsorship winners and their upcoming exhibits:

September 2 – October 9, 2025:
Josephy Center for Arts and Culture's "Nez Perce: Removal and Return"

January 6 – February 5, 2026:
Nordic Northwest's "Swedish Cabins: Legacy of Henry Steiner and Fogelbo"

May 5 – June 4, 2026:
Hellenic-American Cultural Center and Museum's "Master Penworks of Tom Stefolpoulos"

June 20 – July 24, 2026:
Willamette Heritage Center's "Caralyn B. Sheldon: The Nation's First Female Governor"

August 3-28, 2026:
Keizer Heritage Museum's "A Willamette Farmer's Legacy: Thomas D Keizur"

In January, seven applications were received. Awards are expected to be made in the upcoming months and Capitol exhibits will be scheduled for 2027.

Welcome! 2025

The Oregon State Capitol Foundation and the Capitol Club hosted new and returning statewide elected officials, legislators and lobbyists to a celebration kicking off the 2025 Oregon Legislative Session on February 6 at Willamette University.

Thank you to our sponsors for helping make Welcome! a success.

Title Sponsors:
Oregon State Capitol Foundation and Capitol Club

Bronze Sponsors:
bau Oregon, CFM Advocates, Dalton Advocacy, Inc., Oregon Business & Industry and Willamette Valley Vineyards

Contributing Sponsors:
The Holt Company, Oregon Beer & Wine Distributors Association and Southern Glazers Wine & Spirits

We look forward to kicking off the Legislative Session with you at the Capitol in 2027. Stay tuned for details.

Pictured top to bottom: Rep. Christine Drazan, Sen. President Rob Wagner, Rep. Lisa Fragala, Izaack Drazan and Sen. Lisa Reynolds; Sen. James Manning Jr. and Andrew Hull; Joan Plank and Rep. Darin Harbick; Ginny Burdick, Elizabeth Howe and Speaker Julie Fahey; Greg Leo and Sen. Mike McLane. Photos by: Joel Zak

Thirteen Portraits of Oregon's Past Governors have been found!

The Capitol Foundation asked for your help tracking down formal artwork portraying former Oregon governors. We are excited to report that thirteen portraits of Oregon Governors have been located since this project started in 2021. Our most recent "finds" are portraits of former Governors Walter M. Pierce and George L. Woods.

Please let us know if you have seen any of Oregon's missing governors' portraits on display or in storage. We would love to hear from you!

Answer from the back cover: Gary Wilhelms, Board chair and one of the original members of the Oregon State Capitol Foundation.

Get to know a little more about Gary by visiting our website at: OregonCapitolFoundation.org/hon-gary-wilhelms/.

Remembering Oregonians Who Added to the Capitol Story

Hon. Ray French, former member of the Oregon House of Representatives, died September 5, 2021, age 94.

Hon. Phil Lang, former Speaker of the House and Capitol Foundation Board member, died December 29, 2024, age 95.

Lt. Glen L. Rader, Jr., Oregon State Trooper, died December 4, 2024, age 77.

Nancy "Nan" Sears, former State of Oregon, Legislative Counsel staff, died October 13, 2024, age 82.

Senate President Courtney's Celebration of Life

The Celebration of Life for long-time Senate President Peter Courtney was held on January 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, with a simulcast in the House Chamber. Following the ceremony, a reception was held at the YMCA, where family, friends, and colleagues—including current and former legislators, staff, and lobbyists—gathered to remember and honor his legacy.

Pictured above: Sen. President Courtney with his son at the Salem pedestrian bridge dedication in 2017. Photo by: Ron Cooper

To view the video shared at the service, please scan the QR code below.

Does this cowboy look familiar?

Look inside to find out if you're right.

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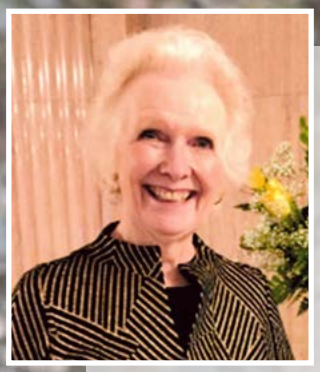

Preserving our Capitol for generations to come

By Frankie Bell

When I was ten, my mother would send me from Portland to visit my grandma, in Eugene. The high point of the trip was when the bus went south down Summer Street, and the State Capitol came into view. I was so excited to see the gold man, and I knew that I was halfway to Eugene. Little did I know at that time what a significant impact the building would have on my life.

Some thirty years later, we moved to Salem. I was working for Meier and Frank when I heard of a job opening in the State Capitol Guide office. 1967, began the long history of my Capitol career and commitment to the building and its history.

In the later part of my career, I had the privilege to be a part of the formation of the Capitol Foundation which will be the steward of preserving the Capitol's rich history and documenting recognition of the people who have helped to shape the "Oregon Story."

It seemed like a natural extension to include the Capitol Foundation in my legacy giving to help assure that the Capitol remains a beacon of democracy and history, in its place as the people's building—long after I am gone.

Please help us to continue our programs and consider leaving your own legacy with the Capitol Foundation. Please email us with any questions you have about legacy giving at:

oscf@oregoncapitolfoundation.org.