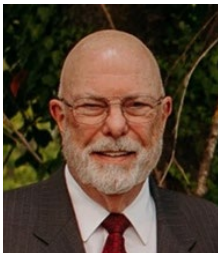
Oregon State
CAPITOL
FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2025



A Message from the Chair

By Hon. Gary Wilhelms

This Board Chair's job is fun! There's a lot going on at the Capitol Foundation.

First of all, you may have noticed something new with the look of this newsletter... the LOGO! We hope you like it. Outreach Committee Chair Ginny Burdick and her committee members deserve the credit.

And then, we've had another change in Board membership. We welcome former State Representative John Watt to the Board, replacing long-time Board member Hon. Jane Cease who has retired. Thank you, Jane, for your many years of dedicated service.

And then, we're very happy that the Capitol Building is coming back to life. Portions of the building have already reopened, and by the end of the year, the entire interior of the building will be open for business. The new plaza in front of the building and most of the exterior work should be completed shortly thereafter. We will keep you posted on reopening events. Some exciting new news is that Willson Park to the West of the building will be undergoing significant redesign and renovation during 2026, with completion expected by Fall. Check out the back cover for what's to come.

And then, as the Capitol Foundation continues to mature, we continually seek ways to secure the ability to meet our ongoing statutory responsibilities. Thus, I take this opportunity to remind our supporters that when the time comes to begin thinking about legacy giving, please give consideration to the Oregon State Capitol Foundation.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Gary

Mark your calendar for December 2nd and come celebrate the season with us at Holidays at the Capitol – Tree Lighting Ceremony! Board Chair Gary Wilhelms will be speaking.

Photo: Holidays at the Capitol – Tree Lighting Ceremony 2019. Courtesy of the Oregon State Capitol.

Preserving our Capitol, sharing its history and engaging Oregonians in our democracy.

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Our Civics Education Initiative Program Is Growing!

We are proud to share that our Civics Education Initiative is now in its fifth year—and continuing to grow. For Round Five, we received twenty-four applications from organizations dedicated to deepening public understanding of Oregon's state and local governments and inspiring civic engagement. These programs help Oregonians to participate meaningfully in public policymaking.

This year's award budget has increased to $150,000, supporting even more programs and organizations.

Award recipients will be announced in late December or early January—stay tuned.

Fourth Round Awardees – YMCA Youth and Government. Photo courtesy of RFH Productions

What's in Your Attic?

We're excited to share that two more portraits have been located—those of George Abernethy (1845–1849) and Joseph Lane (1849–1850, 1853 (acting)). These portraits are housed at the Multnomah County Library, though they are not currently on display. This brings the total number of found portraits to fifteen.

Have a lead on a missing portrait? We would love to hear from you—every tip helps us get closer to preserving Oregon's history.

Learn more about the Missing Governors Portraits Search on our website.

Exciting New Exhibits are Coming to the Capitol in 2026

Sponsored by the Capitol Foundation through the Capitol History Gateway Exhibit Sponsorship Program, new exhibits will be on display at the Capitol next year. These exhibits, located just inside the State Street entrance, celebrate Oregon's diverse history and are free to the public.

2026 Exhibit Schedule:

Jan 6 – Feb 5: *Swedish Cabins: Legacy of Henry Steiner and Fogelbo (Nordic Northwest)*

May 5 – June 4: *Master Penworks of Tom Stefopoulos (Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum)*

June 20 – July 24: *Caralyn B. Shelton: The Nation's First Female Governor* (Willamette Heritage Center) *Appointed, not elected.*

Aug 3 – 28: *A Willamette Farmer's Legacy: Thomas D. Keizur (Keizer Heritage Museum)*

The next application cycle for exhibit sponsorship opens November 14 and closes January 31. Selected virtual exhibits will run between July 2026 – June 2027, with physical displays in 2028.

New Oral Histories Available Online—Listen to the People Behind Our Capitol's History

Discover the stories of Oregon's Capitol through oral history interviews with former elected officials, staffers, lobbyists, and influential Oregonians.

Senator Mike Thorne's interview is now available on the Oregon State Capitol YouTube Channel and the Capitol Foundation's website. Interviews with former Senators Betsy Johnson and Margaret Carter are currently in progress and will be available soon.

To view Senator Thorne's interview, please scan the QR Code.

Reconnecting and Sharing Stories at Our Annual Capitol Alumni Reunion Luncheon

The Capitol Foundation was proud to host this year's Capitol Alumni Reunion Luncheon on September 4, bringing together more than one hundred former colleagues who worked in the Oregon State Capitol.

We are looking ahead to the next luncheon—mark your calendars and watch for a "Save the Date"—we hope to see you there!

Pictured above from top to bottom (column 1)
Tony Meeker, Neil Bryant and Bruce Bishop; Rick Metsger and Lee Beyer; Gov. Barbara Roberts, Daniel Santos, Beth Graham and Mary Beth Bassett.

Pictured above from top to bottom (column 2)
Margie Courtney, Judy Hall and Dixie Hannon and her daughter; Doug Tindall, Larry Campbell and Craig Campbell; Tim Martinez, Nan Heim, Frankie Bell and Chane Griggs. Photos by: Joel Zak Photography

Remembering Those Who Added to the Capitol Story

Kathleen Beaufait, former Oregon Legislative Counsel staff, died March 11, 2025, age 96.

Hon. Gary Hansen, former member of the Oregon House of Representatives, died May 31, 2025, age 81.

Lenore Kipp, former volunteer tour guide at the Oregon State Capitol, died July 7, 2025, age 93.

Dorine L. McTeague, former Oregon Legislative Counsel staff, died September 18, 2025, age 92.

Hon. Bill Morrisette, former member of the Oregon Senate, died April 15, 2025, age 93.

Hon. Hòa Nguyen, member of the Oregon House of Representatives, died October 9, 2025, age 41.

Gil Riddell, former lobbyist, died February 23, 2025.

Russell Sadler, reporter, commentator and journalist, died April 20, 2025, age 82.

Peggy Sato, lobbyist, died August 29, 2025, age 72.

Fred VanNatta, former lobbyist and OSCF Board member, died March 29, 2025, age 86.

Nan Dewey, former lobbyist, died December 4, 2024, age 96.

Hon. Aaron Woods, former member of the Oregon Senate, died April 19, 2025, age 75.

We are excited to announce upcoming events taking place at the Capitol in 2025-26, proudly sponsored by the Capitol Foundation.

November 10-14, 2025
A Tribute to Veterans Exhibit

December 2, 2025
Holidays at the Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony

December 3-24, 2025
Holidays at the Capitol Performances

February 14, 2026
Oregon's Anniversary of Statehood

March 21, 2026
Cherry Blossom Day at the Capitol

March 23-27, 2026
Spring Break Passport to Fun!

Scan the QR Code for more details.

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A New Look for Willson Park

The area just west of the Capitol building will undergo a much-needed redesign and renovation throughout 2026, with completion expected by Fall.

Many familiar features will remain but will be repositioned to improve accessibility and flow. This includes the Walk of Flags—dedicated in 2005, and funded by private donations to the Oregon State Capitol Foundation—which will be carefully relocated as part of the new design. We will keep you updated as the project progresses.

The photo to the left shows the current view of Willson Park. Soon, the broken fountain and two large trees that block the view will be removed. Below shows the exciting new design that will open up the space and enhance the park's beauty.

Photo and rendering courtesy of Mayer/Reed