

Richard L. Green-2010

After receiving his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Northern Colorado, Richard L. Green began his Parks and Recreation career in 1965 as a Recreation Specialist for the Kansas City, Missouri Department of Parks and Recreation. He went on to serve as the Assistant Recreation Director for the City of Flint, Michigan from 1965-1969. He then returned to Missouri to become the Director of Columbia's Parks and Recreation department where he remained for 30 years until his retirement in 1998. During the city's rapid growth, Dick's foresight, advocacy and skill acquiring federal monies led to the addition of over twelve parks, more than doubling the size of the park system. His leadership and innovation in programs and facilities earned Columbia NRPA's Gold Medal Award for Excellence in 1984 making Columbia one of a select group of Missouri cities to ever achieve such recognition. Dick served on MPRA's Executive Board from 1970-1997, working in a variety of different capacities: Chair of the public relations, conference, administrative evaluation and nominations committees. He led the organization as President in 1991-92. Following his Presidency between 1993-97, Dick served as Chairman of the MPRA Legislative and Critical Issues Committee. This four year period was one of the most productive in terms of the legislation impacting public parks in Missouri. Bills were signed into law allowing the formation of regional recreation districts, eliminating the assessed valuation cap on property taxes available to local parks, expanding Neighborhood Improvement District legislation and allowing areas outside cities to petition into an existing parks and recreation system. Even more significant was legislation enabling a local option ½ cent sales tax for funding local parks and recreation services. This measure was revived after previous defeats and passed by the General Assembly in 1995, when Representative Jerry McBride added a House Committee Substitute to House Bill 88. Since its passage, voters in well over 100 cities and counties have approved local parks sales tax initiatives generating over two billion dollars for parks and recreation services in the state. In addition to his service at the state level, Dick was active in the National Recreation and Park Association, serving as Chair of the Great Lakes Regional Council and the Nominating Committee. He was also Chair of the Council of Affiliate Presidents, member of the National Forum Committee and received the Great Lakes Regional Council Professional of the Year Award in 1993. His service to MPRA has been recognized in the Municipal Section Distinguished Service Award in 1983, the Fellow Award in 1990 and the Retirement Service Award in 1998. One of Dick's greatest pleasures was helping young professionals he mentored through internships or employment in their early careers, then saw them move on successfully to numerous other cities around the state and nation. Through his many contributions, steadfast counsel and the lifelong friendships, Richard L. Green leaves an indelible mark on the parks and recreation profession.