

The Mayors of Lacey 1966-2016

A.G. Homann - 1966 – 1971



A.G. “Al” Homann was named the first mayor of Lacey following the successful incorporation of the city, taking his oath of office on December 12, 1966. In November of the following year, he was re-elected to a full, four-year term.

Known for his forceful style of leadership, Homann served as a strong guiding hand while the young city of Lacey went through its early growing pains. He also pushed hard for growth, bringing his experience as a successful businessman to bear in attracting new commerce to the young city. His role in local politics did not end with the conclusion of his tenure as mayor; as he and his wife, Anna, were often publicly critical of decisions made by future city leaders.

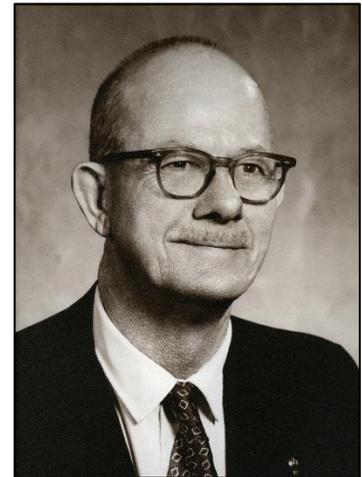
Born in Plainsville, Kansas in 1897, Homann moved to the Pacific Northwest in the 1920’s and worked his way up from a job as a laborer to eventually become a partner in a construction firm. He and his wife moved to Thurston County in 1940, and his A.G. Homann Construction Company quickly became one of the top construction contractors in the area. Construction of major additions to Fort Lewis during World War II, the Capital Pavilion (now known as Marcus Pavilion) on the Saint Martin’s University campus, and much of South Sound Center and Panorama City are only a few of Homann’s professional contributions to South Puget Sound communities.

In 1973, the Homann Foundation donated to the City of Lacey eight acres of land which became Lacey’s first city park. Al Homann died on February 15, 1975.

Albert Van Andel - 1972 – 3/1973

Lacey’s second mayor provided a strong contrast to the style of Homann. Entering office in January of 1972, Albert Van Andel supported open avenues of communication, government transparency, and receiving input from a wide range of Lacey’s residents. Speaking on his approach to the office, he said “I like people. And I like to surround myself with people with are civic-minded, who are well-versed in particular categories, and areas of municipal concern – and also the humanities.”

While in office, Van Andel focused on the need to consolidate the city’s departments into one complex, providing the city with new facilities in the process. He also helped to bring bus and sewer services to Lacey, and worked toward the annexation of the Lost Lake area into the city.



Born in Haarlem, the Netherlands in 1912, Van Andel emigrated to the United States with his parents in 1919. Previous to his time as mayor, Van Andel spent nearly forty years as a pastor and worked as an administrator for the US Army, at one time serving on the staff of General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He had also worked as a journalist and business administrator for Saint Martin’s College and Panorama City, bringing a wide range of experience to the office of mayor.

Van Andel resigned as mayor of Lacey on March 9, 1973 as he was moving to an area outside of the then-boundaries of the City of Lacey.

Leon Schiendelman - 3/1973 – 6/1973



Leon Schiendelman took over as the city's mayor in March of 1973 following the resignation of Mayor Albert Van Andel. The most notable feature of his tenure as mayor was its brevity, as Schiendelman served in the role for only three months.

Originally from New Jersey, Schiendelman got his first taste of the Pacific Northwest when the Army stationed him at Fort Lewis in 1942. He remained in the Army after World War II ended and later served in the Korean War, eventually receiving two silver stars, one bronze star and reaching the rank of major by the time he retired from the military in 1960. He then went on to work as director of Thurston County Civil Defense and an administrator for the Bureau of Land Management before returning to Fort Lewis to work in a civilian capacity.

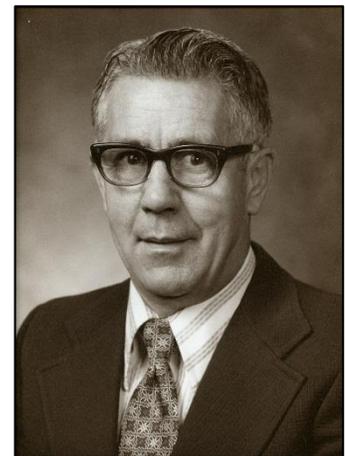
While Schiendelman was working days for the government, at night he worked toward the goal of seeing Lacey incorporated as a city. It was because of this hard work that Schiendelman was elected as mayor in the ramp-up to the city's first incorporation attempt. However, since that incorporation effort failed, he did not serve in the position until after the resignation of Albert Van Andel.

Three months after taking office, Schiendelman stepped down from his position as mayor to take a position as administrative officer for the US Army Support Command headquarters in South Korea. Schiendelman passed away in March of 2002.

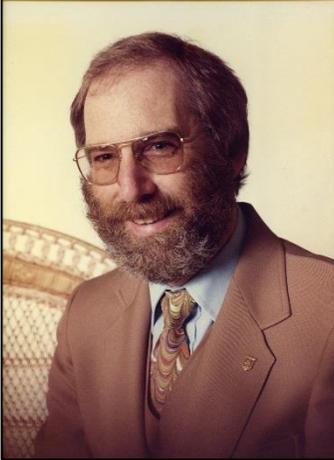
Thomas Huntamer - 7/1973 – 12/1973

Thomas Huntamer, Lacey's third mayor in one year, took office in July of 1973. However, this was not his first taste of the position, as he had served as mayor pro-tem for two weeks following the resignation of Albert Van Andel in March of that year.

Huntamer was a Lacey native, attending Lacey Grade School in the early 1920s and graduating from Olympia High School in 1933. His father started Huntamer Water Works, which was later purchased by the City of Lacey and became the city's first water system. Huntamer went to work on the Grand Coulee dam in 1936, and later moved on to work as a "Seabee" – a member of the US Naval Construction Forces – during World War II. He moved back to Lacey in 1954 and began working as a bus driver for North Thurston Schools, eventually becoming the school district's Superintendent of Transportation.



Huntamer was the final Lacey mayor to serve under the mayor-council form of government. He remained on the city council until 1979, having served on the body since incorporation aside from a one-year hiatus in 1968. In 2000, the City of Lacey honored him by renaming the newly expanded Woodland Square Park as Thomas Huntamer Park.



William Bush - 1974 – 1975

William Bush took the oath of office on December 13, 1973, and was the first mayor to serve their entire term under the new council-manager form of government, which placed the day-to-day operations of the city under the supervision of a full-time city manager who served at the pleasure of the city council.

Two of Bush's priorities while in office were improved transportation infrastructure and the construction of a performing arts center on the Saint Martin's campus. Bush also led the effort to create the Intergovernmental Human Resources Committee, a body made up of government and citizen representatives from Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater which distributed a portion of the cities' funds to local service groups working for the benefit of the communities. Additionally, he formed the Blue Ribbon Postal Tax Force Committee to help solve several considerable service issues with the Lacey Post Office. However, his term as mayor was also marked by tumult, including a very public dispute with Fire District 3 over funding, an investigation of Police Chief Jim Land and controversy concerning proposed utility and business and occupation taxes.

In observance of Bush's lifelong support for parks and recreation, the City of Lacey dedicated William Bush Park in 2005.

Karen Fraser - 1976 – 11/1980

On January 22, 1976, Karen Fraser was elected as Lacey's first female mayor by the Lacey City Council. At 31 years of age, she was also the youngest mayor elected up until that time. When appointed to fill a vacancy on the city council three years earlier, she was the first female to be named to that position as well.

Even by the time of her first election to the city council, Fraser was not new to the political scene. She started her career as an intern at the state legislature and later went on to work as a legislative liaison and policy analyst for several state agencies.

During Fraser's tenure as mayor, Lacey built a new, permanent city hall, the Lacey Museum was established, and the city's utilities and transportation infrastructure were greatly improved. And, while extremely capable and well-educated in all aspects of governing the city, Fraser took particular interest in advancing the causes of gender equality and human rights more generally. As mayor, she was widely popular and enjoyed strong support from the community.



After serving two terms as Lacey's mayor, Fraser went on to serve eight years as a Thurston County Commissioner and four years as a state representative. She won a spot in the Washington State Senate in 1993, an office she held until December of 2016.

In 2018, the Woodland Trail was renamed the Karen Fraser Woodland Trail to honor her contributions to the community.

Mark Brown - 12/1980 – 1986



Mark Brown joined the Lacey City Council in late 1977, and was chosen as mayor in December of 1980 to fill the vacancy left by Karen Fraser's election to the Thurston County Commission. Only 31 years old when he became mayor, Brown was known as an energetic, intelligent and brash politician with very strong opinions who was nevertheless able to build consensus between conflicting groups.

Born into a politically active family, Brown was highly involved in politics from an early age. Before joining the city council, he worked on a number of political campaigns and served as the vice-president of the Washington State Young Democrats. In a professional capacity, he worked as a lobbyist for the Washington Federation of State Employees.

Serving as mayor during financially trying times, Brown nonetheless was able to use his direct and dynamic approach to encourage cooperation between public and private groups to promote economic growth. In addition, he was instrumental in the construction of an Interstate 5 off-ramp into Lacey and the creation of the Chehalis-Western Trail. Research conducted in 1986 as part of a master's project at the Evergreen State College determined Brown to be the most influential decision-maker in Thurston County at that time.

Brown resigned as mayor in January of 1987 to focus on a new position as deputy director of the Washington Federation of State Employees and to spend more time with his family.

Kay Boyd - 1987 – 1990

Kay Boyd took an unusual route to become Lacey's mayor. At the age of 40, she obtained a divorce from her husband and the resulting financial hardship forced her and her two children into homelessness. However, through this adversity, Boyd found new goals in her life and quickly set about realizing them. She enrolled at the Evergreen State College and was appointed to the Human Services Review Council, her first role in local government. Twelve years later, Boyd was the mayor of Lacey and a seven-year veteran of the Lacey City Council. This was in addition to playing past or ongoing roles in dozens of local organizations, a series of undertakings which one reporter characterized as "a mid-life rush of accomplishments."

Big changes came to Lacey while Boyd served as mayor. Hawks Prairie was annexed following a years-long conflict between pro- and anti-annexation groups, and the Lacey Timberland Library was constructed. In addition to these very visible reminders of her service to the community, Boyd also accomplished much in assisting victims of domestic violence and promoting diversity in the community.



Kay Boyd passed away on November 12, 2010.

Gene Liddell - 1991 – 1992



Gene Liddell, an experienced educator and community advocate, was the first Filipina-American mayor of any city in the United States.

Born in Kahaku, Hawaii, Gene Liddell came to the Pacific Northwest to study at Washington State University and later the University of Oregon. When elected to the Lacey City Council in 1987, Liddell was already a 23-year veteran of the education field, having worked as a teacher, counselor, administrator and program director. In her twenty years as a member of the community, she played a major role in the foundation of the SafePlace shelter for victims of domestic violence, served on the boards of the Thurston and Mason Alcohol Recovery Council and Thurston County Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

As mayor, Liddell worked to promote diversity in the community and programs to assist disadvantaged women and youth. Preservation and rehabilitation of the local environment also figured highly on her list of priorities, and it was during her time as mayor that Lacey was named a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, a distinction that the city has maintained every year since.

Liddell's service to the public did not end with the conclusion of her term as mayor, and she went on to serve in the governor's cabinet as the head of both the state Departments of Community Development and School-to-Work Transition.

Jon Halvorson - 1993 – 10/1996

Jon Halvorson, a longtime administrator for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, was elected to the Lacey City Council in 1991 and became mayor two years later.

As an extremely active member of a wide array of community groups and governmental bodies, including six years on the Lacey Planning Commission, Halvorson brought a great deal of experience to the office of mayor. His professional background in providing assistance to disadvantaged members of the community also informed his approach to city administration.



A defining moment of Halvorson's administration came about when Lacey was rocked by the gang-related murder of 13-year old Larry Rodgers in 1993. In the aftermath of the slaying, Halvorson called a public meeting to generate a plan to combat gang violence and help the community to heal. Nearly 1,000 citizens were in attendance. The organization Stop the Violence grew out of this meeting, and these and other efforts helped to greatly reduce gang activity in Lacey. Halvorson's leadership and ability to bring the community together were instrumental to the success of these efforts.

Since his term as mayor, Halvorson has continued in the tradition of deep involvement in public service. He remained on the council until 1999, and has in the time since served on the boards of LOTT Wastewater Treatment, the Housing Authority of Thurston County, the Lacey and Olympia/Thurston County Chambers of Commerce, the North Thurston Education Foundation and many others. He was named Thurston County Citizen of the Year in 2003.

Nancy Peterson - 11/1996 – 1999



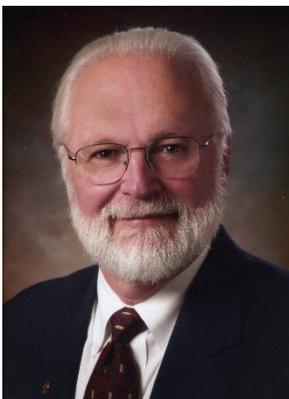
Nancy Peterson joined the Lacey City Council in 1993 and assumed the responsibilities of mayor as 1996 drew to a close.

Peterson was born and raised in Olympia, and graduated from Olympia High School in 1961. In 1965, she moved into the area that was soon to be incorporated as the City of Lacey. Nearly twenty years later she enrolled in the Evergreen State College, from which she graduated in 1985 with a new perspective on life and a strong desire to serve her community. Soon afterward, Peterson met Kay Boyd, who pushed her to volunteer with the city. This volunteer work quickly turned into a position on the Lacey Planning Commission, on which she sat for the next six years and which served as her platform to reaching higher office.

As mayor, Peterson's top priority was ensuring the city was prepared for long-term future growth. In pursuit of this goal, Peterson led the way in the adoption of the Lacey 2020 Plan which aimed to redevelop the city's core. She also worked closely with Olympia mayor Doug Mah on a compromise which later resulted in the construction of the Hands On Children's Museum and the Regional Athletic Complex.

Peterson served on the city council through 2007. Since leaving, she has remained active in the community, holding a position on the Public Facilities Board and participating in the Woodland Square District Initiative among other volunteer pursuits.

Graeme Sackrison - 2000 – 2003



Graeme Sackrison, a future-oriented community leader who worked to protect the local environment, holds the distinction of being the first person to serve as Lacey mayor in two non-consecutive terms.

By the time Sackrison reached the office of mayor, he already had a long history with the City of Lacey. After moving to the area as a child in 1956, he attended Lacey Grade School and North Thurston High School. After attaining a degree in economics and business in 1966 and spending four years in the Air Force, he went to work for the Employment Security Department, from which he retired in 1998. In May of 1997, Sackrison was appointed to the Lacey City Council to complete the unexpired term of former mayor Bill Bush.

During his first stint as mayor, Sackrison saw numerous city projects initiated or completed, including further development in Hawk's Prairie, passage of a nearly \$10 million parks bond for the improvement of fifteen local parks, and the construction of a new senior center. Additionally, he worked to create an urban forestry board, improve local trail systems as a means of transportation and build a skate park. After serving as mayor for four years, Sackrison stepped down to allow other council members to hold the position.

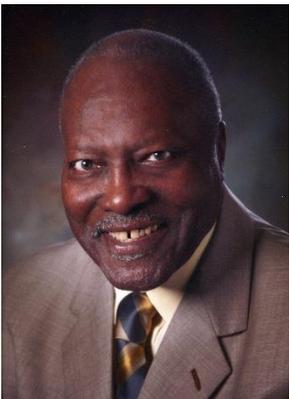
Graeme Sackrison 2008 – 2009

When Sackrison stepped back into the office of mayor after four years, Lacey was facing significant issues with growth and finances. Where his first tenure as mayor saw an explosion in residential and retail development, his second saw that growth grind nearly to a halt after the nationwide economic downturn of 2008. However, Sackrison and the rest of the council were able to help the city weather the economic storm through a development policy that walked a tightrope between allowing laissez-faire growth and halting expansion entirely.

Even more than his first, Sackrison's second term was focused on protecting and restoring the natural environment in and around Lacey. Through programs and ordinances which decreased pollution making its way into local streams and protected the city's trees, Sackrison raised the community's awareness of the value of the environment and helped to preserve those resources for future generations.

Following an unsuccessful re-election bid to the council in 2009, Sackrison continued to focus his energies on environmental issues, holding a leadership position in the Thurston Climate Action Team and working to improve energy efficiency in Thurston County.

Virgil Clarkson - 2004 – 2007



Virgil Clarkson, who occupied the office of mayor in two non-consecutive terms, was Lacey's first black mayor.

Born in Houston, Texas in 1932, Clarkson earned a degree in physics and mathematics from Texas Southern University before spending nearly fifteen years in the US Army. After relocating to the South Sound in 1966, he took a job with the state Department of Natural Resources and later transferred to the Department of Transportation, where he served for 27 years before retiring in 1999.

While Clarkson quickly embraced the local community on his arrival in the South Sound, he was often treated as unwelcome due to his race. It was this love for the community and a desire to make it more welcoming to people of color which pushed Clarkson to put his energies into the fight for civil rights, perhaps best represented by his efforts in the late 1960s to get open housing ordinances passed in Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston County.

As he assumed the role of mayor for the first time in 2004, Clarkson set out to bring family-wage, environmentally friendly jobs to the area and make sure that the City of Lacey pursued policies with an eye toward the changing needs of its population. In working toward these objectives, Clarkson saw the City of Lacey convert to the use of 100% green sources of electricity and make numerous strides in improving the quality of life for local seniors.

Virgil Clarkson 2012 – 2013

Clarkson returned to the office of mayor in his fourteenth year on the Lacey City Council. In the four years between his stints as mayor, Clarkson's priorities for the community remained constant. He continued to advocate for the needs of seniors, working to raise funds for an expansion of the Lacey Senior Center. This vision was finally realized in 2015, and the newly improved facility was renamed the Virgil S. Clarkson Senior Center in recognition of his efforts.

Virgil Clarkson from the Lacey City Council in 2017 after nearly two decades of service on that body. He remains extremely active as a community volunteer and leader outside of the council, lending his time and expertise to a wide range of groups.

Andy Ryder - 2014 – 2017



A successful businessman and second-generation leader of the Lacey community, Andy Ryder joined the city council in 2010 and was appointed as mayor four years later.

Ryder, a Lacey native, grew up with local politics. His father, Ron Ryder, was very active in community issues and organizations, and served on the Lacey Planning Commission.

While in office, Ryder has pushed to preserve Lacey as a leader amongst Thurston County jurisdictions by working to help small businesses and encourage commercial growth. Also high on his list of priorities are providing educational and health care assistance to veterans, a goal which became a reality with the opening of the Lacey Veterans Service Office in October of 2014, and re-energizing the Woodland district as a mixed-use city center.

Ryder has also used his position as mayor to promote Lacey as an inclusive community, arguing for an act of solidarity on behalf of the city with the victims of the 2016 Orlando mass shooting and participating in local Pride celebrations. In the summer of 2016, as the City of Lacey reached its 50th Anniversary, Ryder and his fellow council members allocated nearly \$1 million for the construction of a new museum to help preserve the community's unique history.