

To Know Lynn Lundquist



Farmer, rancher and teacher. Lawmaker, leader and advocate. At home in the country and at work in the city, Lynn Lundquist lived a purpose-driven life anchored by his singular commitment to Oregon and the people who live here.

A friend and ally to many, former speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives and founding president of the Oregon Business Association, Lynn Lundquist passed away April 9 at the age of 78. This was not expected. No one had prepared for it — not Lynn or Barbara, his wife of 42 years, and surely not his colleagues at the Children’s Institute, where Lynn was a treasured board member and vice-chair of the

Ready for School campaign. “Lynn was one of a kind,” said Gary Withers, chair of the Children’s Institute’s board of directors. “He brought a lot of heart to our legislative work, and his blend of blue-sky optimism and down-home pragmatism is what most of us imagine when we talk about wisdom.”

When it came to children, Lynn was all in, with both feet — and not just with the brood of eight who called him dad. At the time of his death, Lynn was working hard on passage of House Bill 2013, Governor Kitzhaber’s early learning bill and Ready for School’s top legislative priority. He had already testified in support of HB 2013 and a related bill, made numerous legislative visits, and was preparing to testify again. As a resident of Powell Butte in Central Oregon, Lynn never let miles or mountains isolate him from important policy conversations taking place in Salem or Portland. “Even in a whiteout, he would cross the Cascades to attend a meeting if he thought he could make a difference,” said Ready for School chair, Isaac Regenstreif.

And make a difference he did. Lynn was a fierce advocate for children, with a knack for explaining complex early childhood issues in clear, simple and powerful terms. His considerable influence was rooted in mutual respect and a belief that common decency was the best salve for political wounds. Lynn did not conform to strict party ideology, earning recognition across the political spectrum as a thoughtful and considerate leader. And whether he knew it or not, every time he crossed the Cascades, Lynn was also helping bridge Oregon’s urban-rural divide.

Lynn also on the board of CareOregon, a nonprofit health plan, and brought together its CEO, Patrick Curran, and Swati Adarkar, President and CEO of the Children’s Institute, to talk about connecting health and education.

“Lynn deeply believed that both were critical to child success,” said Adarkar. “One of his last meetings was to bring us together to forge a partnership to make sure children are both healthy and successful in school.”

Current House Republican Leader Mike McLane knew Lynn as a neighbor and a statesman and offered this on the House floor: “Because of his work in the House, Oregon is a better place. All of us will have done well if they say of us one day that we never let anything get in the way of what’s best for Oregonians, and that we always knew how to lend a hand with a smile. That was Lynn Lundquist.”