

Former Clark College President Bob Knight passes

We are sorry to share that Bob Knight, who led Clark as president from 2007 to 2019, passed away on Dec 15th. He was 67.

A graduate of the West Point Military Academy, Bob served 21 ye



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Bob was known to regularly walk the campus, chatting with students, staff and faculty to keep in touch and assess the needs of the college. He coined the phrase “Penguin Nation” to build a sense of camaraderie for the campus and for Clark within the broader community.

Students were always first in Bob’s mind when considering new programs and improvements to existing offerings. During his tenure, Clark underwent a holistic makeover of its academic programs and support services aimed at increasing student completion rates and better preparing graduates of family wage jobs. He launched a \$1 million scholarship campaign through Clark College Foundation.

Clark College Milestones Under President Bob Knight’s Leadership:

- *2007*: President Bob Knight introduced the presidential coin given to faculty and staff members who provided exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community.
- *October 2008*: Clark College celebrated its 75th anniversary and launched a year-long diamond jubilee with a plethora of special events

- *February 2009*: O'Connell Sports Center dedication with Claude "Skeet" O'Connell, age 93
- *September 2009*: Columbia Tech Center, Clark's campus in East Vancouver, opens
- *September 2011*: Oliva Family Early Learning Center, phase I is dedicated
- *April 2012*: The college's Royce E. Pollard Japanese Friendship Garden was dedicated during the annual Sakura Festival
- *September 2012*: Ribbon cutting for Clark's Diversity Center in Gaiser Hall
- *September 2012*: Beacock Music Hall naming ceremony
- *September 2013*: Clark dedicated its Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy in the Clark College Building at WSU Vancouver
- *March 2014*: Clark College opened its Veterans Resource Center. President Bob Knight said, "As a vet myself, it is a proud day for Clark College to be opening a resource center for our student veterans."
- *June 2014*: Ribbon cutting for the Firstenburg Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center
- *June 2014*: The Hank and Bernice Boschma family partnered with Clark College Foundation to provide 60 acres for a Clark College north county satellite campus at the Ridgefield junction
- *Fall 2015*: Clark offers its first baccalaureate degree, Bachelor of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene
- *October 2016*: STEM Building ribbon cutting
- *Winter 2017*: Clark offers its second baccalaureate degree, Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management
- *October 2017*: The Penguin Pantry opens, providing free food boxes to students
- *November 2017*: Tod and Maxine McClaskey Culinary Institute ribbon cutting
- *Fall 2018*: Clark offers its third baccalaureate degree, Bachelor of Applied Science in Human Services



Bob Knight with ASCC students at 2011 Opening Day



Kagayama Path at Sakura



Bob Knight with three former Mayors Royce Pollard, John Kageyama, Tim Levitt, and Bruce Hagensen



First citizen Bob Schafer, center, with SEH Vice President of

Operations Ben Bagherpour, far left, and Bob Knight, far right



Bob Knight at 2014 Clark Penguins Basketball playoffs sendoff



Bob Knight with Vice President of Instruction Tim Cook at State of the College in 2015



Cutting STEM building ribbon with Governor Jay Inslee in 2016



With kids at the Día del Niños



Beacock Music Hall naming ceremony with members of the Beacock family and trustees



With Baird and Murray in the baking lab



Bob Knight with Oswald at opening of Columbia Tech Center

Bob's Other Contributions to the Clark County Community:

Bob Knight was named 2016 Clark County First Citizen for his service to the community, which included these institutions and organizations:

- American Red Cross, Southwest Washington Chapter
- Boys & Girls Club of Southwest Washington
- Columbia River Economic Development Council
- Fort Vancouver National Trust (now The Historic Trust)
- Rotary Club of Vancouver
- Washington State University Vancouver Advisory Council
- Workforce Southwest Washington

Remembrances from those who worked with Bob Knight:

“Bob often quoted General George Marshall: There is no limit to the good you can do if you don’t care who gets the credit. Bob never cared about the credit. But his service and leadership spoke for itself. That’s why he was honored as Clark County’s First Citizen. And that’s the reason for the outpouring of affection and respect in honoring him for a life truly well lived.”

–Barbara Kerr, former Executive Director of Communications and Marketing at Clark College

“Bob was a force of nature. I have many fond memories of our years at Clark: filming silly videos, getting lost during Hood to Coast, commencements at Larch Correctional facility. I still try to embody several of his leadership traits like the importance of showing up and being present for people, always putting students first, and making the right decision even when it’s the hard choice.”

–Dr. Tim Cook, President, Clackamas Community College; former Clark College Vice President of Instruction

“Bob often said Clark College is all about the student and meant it. He was very approachable as president and truly enjoyed being with the students. One of my favorite memories was when some students challenged him to run through the college’s water feature. The jets would randomly turn on, so you risked getting soaked. Bob didn’t hesitate to take their challenge. He ran across the feature multiple times in his suit and tie, surviving the blasts of water. The students were amazed a college president would take the time and risk the danger to play that game with them. Friendships were built that day. Bob was truly all about the student.”

–Jack Burkman, Port of Vancouver Board of Commissioners, former Clark College Trustee

“Bob is the best of the best—one of a kind. He cared deeply about our community. At Clark College, it was all about the students! As trustees, Addison Jacobs and I did the right thing when we convinced Bob to apply for the presidency. Because of his leadership and vision, he helped stabilize and advance the college. I will cherish each minute we worked together at Clark.”

—Rhona Sen Hoss, former Clark College Trustee

“Bob was a ‘walk around’ leader. He went to people, where they were, across the board. He listened, he was approachable, and he was fun. Because of this, he had support and led the college through a long, healing growth period—a unique and important contribution in Clark College’s history. I am truly saddened to hear of his passing.”

—Addison Jacobs, former Clark College Trustee

Remembering Bob Knight

- The Clark College community and Clark College Foundation will reflect and remember former President Bob Knight on **Friday, January 10 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the main campus (PUB161)**. The college also will fly the flag at half-mast that day.
- Bob’s family has arranged a memorial service on **Monday, January 13 at 11:00 a.m. at the AC Hotel Vancouver Waterfront** (333 West Columbia Way, Vancouver, Wash.)

Read The Columbian story about Bob Knight passing.

Read Clark College Foundation’s tribute to Bob Knight on his retirement.

View Clark College Foundation’s video tribute to Bob Knight on his retirement.