

Don Henderson

2017 Hall of Honor Inductee

Don Henderson's legacy encompasses decades of service to the people of El Paso. Mr. Henderson ran for alderman and was elected in 1973. He served as the Parks, Recreation and Health alderman during this time. He was responsible for overseeing the following projects: construction of Pavo Real Park and Pool in the Lower Valley, the new pool at Washington Park, and the pool at Westside Park. He also supervised construction on Travis White Park (East El Paso) and Ponder Park (West El Paso). As an alderman, Mr.



Don Henderson presents President Gerald Ford with a Key to the City of El Paso during the president's 1976 visit to El Paso for a special Gold Star Mothers Bicentennial program

Henderson also ensured that a new city animal shelter was constructed.

Mr. Henderson served as mayor of El Paso from 1975 to 1977. During this time, Mr. Henderson obtained federal funding to establish Sun Metro. Furthermore, the city government under Mayor Henderson obtained funds to improve highway infrastructure in El Paso and authorized the clearing of the right-of-way for the extension of Hawkins to North Loop, as well as the widening of Zaragoza through Ysleta. As mayor, Don Henderson, along with City Council, established the first Convention and Tourist Bureau. Mr. Henderson also conducted the first negotiations with the Fire and Police Association under the Collective Bargaining Act.

During his term as mayor, Mr. Henderson established the first U.S. Border Cities organization and brought mayors, council representatives, staff, and more than 200 federal officials to review and study the border. This activity helped create the U.S. Border Commission. Mr. Henderson, moreover, was invited along with other U.S. mayors to the White House to discuss city issues with President Gerald Ford. He, in turn, invited the president to visit El Paso for a special Gold Star Mothers Bicentennial program in 1976.

Since his time as mayor, Mr. Henderson worked with the Smithsonian to bring musical, dance, and folk groups from around the world to El Paso. He worked with Elizabeth Gaidry to create Viva El Paso!, the spectacular show at McKelligon Canyon that depicts the history of El Paso. He and Mayor Fred Hervey also led an effort to build the Wilderness Park Museum and the Military History Museum.