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Community celebrates Ken White Day

By MARY SCHLEY

GREETED BY Monterey High School cheerleaders, family and dozens of friends and admirers doing their best to croon “For he’s a jolly good fellow,”

former Carmel Mayor Ken White was crowned and robed during a surprise party Saturday in honor of his 90th birthday. The bash shut down a block of Casanova south of Eighth and featured longtime KSBW anchors Dan Green and Erin Clark as emcees, as well as plenty of food and drink, popcorn, cotton candy, and endless accolades.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Feted like no one else, former Mayor Ken White was given the royal treatment at a surprise block party where Mayor Dave Potter read a proclamation in honor of his 90th birthday.

Decades of service

At the party, Mayor Dave Potter read a proclamation honoring White for his decades of service to the community and the city, and at its Aug. 27 meeting, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors approved a similar resolution. California Assemblyman Robert Rivas authored one as well.

The proclamation read by Potter notes that White “began his long career in leadership in 1959 with the Monterey Unified School District as a football and wrestling coach, later becoming the athletic director,” and that he subsequently joined the Carmel Unified School District Board

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of Education, where he served as chair.

He also served on the Carmel Forest and Beach Commission, was elected to the city council in 1988 and became mayor four years later, serving until 2000.

“Throughout his time in public service, Ken White gained a reputation for his clear thinking, fairness and ability to build consensus,” Potter read from the proclamation.

He then listed White’s many affiliations over the decades, including as chair of the Friends of Sunset Center, former president of Monterey County Pops, and service with a half-dozen other cultural organizations.

White still serves on the Carmel Area Wastewater District board of directors “and is also well known across the Peninsula for his continuous work with The Salvation Army.”

‘Mr. Carmel’

“Ken has long been acknowledged to be ‘Mr. Carmel’ and has truly dedicated and committed his life to the betterment of Carmel and the greater Peninsula, and has

done so with kindness, thoughtfulness and a sense of humor,” according to Potter.

“Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that I, Mayor Dave Potter on behalf of the Carmel-by-the Sea City Council and all citizens thereof, do hereby proclaim today, Sept. 7, 2024, to officially be declared ‘Ken White Day’ in the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, and we wish Ken White the happiest birthday and thank him for all he has done and continues to do to make our community so much better.”

Spearheaded by 5th District Monterey County Supervisor Mary Adams, the county’s resolution refers to White’s birth in Berkeley in 1934 and observes that he “was by all accounts a ‘heck of a good kid,’” who attended Chico State University, where he met Jean. They were married for 61 years before her death in 2022, raised two children, Mike and Stacie, and have a half-dozen grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The county resolution also notes White was named the Carmel Residents Association’s Citizen of the Year in 2008 and was Pacific Repertory Theatre’s Bohemian of the Year in 2023. In 2012, the Pebble Beach Tour d’Elegance crowned him Volunteer of the Year.