

FOUNDATION

EVENING ON THE PLAZA

State Representative Uvalde Lindsey Gets Things Done For People

*J*ust as he has done all of his adult life, last year Uvalde Lindsey saw an opportunity to help people and responded. The 69-year-old Harrison native, self-described as “semi-retired” at the time, was elected in November as the new state representative from District 88 in Washington County.

Asked why he decided to run, Lindsey wastes no time, as is his habit, in getting to the point. “Out of 12 representatives from Washington and Benton counties, six were term-limited out and one was retiring,” he says. “Running for office is not pleasant, but someone has to do it. People said to me, ‘You’ve got some time. You’ve been around the system.’”

To say Lindsey has been around the system is quite an understatement. From the day

in the early 1970s when Mayor Hugh Ashley convinced him to serve on the Harrison City Council, Lindsey has developed a reputation for understanding “the system” at the local, state, and national levels as well as any Arkansan.

The success of his efforts has been measured in rural water systems, highways, and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA), among other accomplishments. Along the way, Lindsey worked for and with some of the best known names in Arkansas history, including Walmart founder Sam Walton, President Bill Clinton, and his long-time friend and mentor, former U.S. Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt.

In recognition of a lifetime of getting things done for people, Lindsey will receive the 2009



Uvalde Lindsey

Ozarks Ambassador Award from the North Arkansas College Foundation. Hammerschmidt will introduce him at the Foundation’s annual Evening on the Plaza Dinner on Friday, May 8, at 6:30 p.m. in the L.E. “Gene” Durand Center. A reception at 6 p.m. in the Fed Ex Freight Atrium on Northark’s Center Campus precedes the dinner.

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A 1958 graduate of Harrison High School, Lindsey says growing up in Harrison was like living in a classic 1950s or 1960s television show, like “Leave It to Beaver” or “Father Knows Best.”

“When I was growing up, Harrison was a town of about 5,000 people, about the same

size as Rogers or Springdale,” he notes. “It was the ideal community. No one locked their doors. Fayetteville was the big town with a population of around 10,000.”

In the Harrison of those days, he remembers, “Everyone seemed to care for everyone else. We were very close and

supportive of each other. We came from different lifestyles, but city kids and country kids got along. The values of family and community were drilled into us by our parents and community.”

Although it was a small town, Harrison was “the center of commerce” for the area, Lindsey says, and “all roads led to Boone County.”

“Harrison had a strong business community and good community leaders. We had role models like Rabie Rhodes,” he continues. “We had good schools and wonderful teachers. I remember taking Latin in high school. Harrison was one of the few schools in the country that still taught Latin.

“We would go to Tommy Rogers’ house or Jerry Moore’s house after school and on weekends, and play football in their yards,” Uvalde recalls. “Someone’s mother always had milk and cookies.”

Those were “almost the good old days,” Lindsey says. “Our country was closing down the Korean War and at peace. The national economy was good and our local economy was great. It was a great time to grow up, a wonderful community, very nurturing. I miss those things.”

OZARKS AMBASSADOR AWARD

The Ozarks Ambassador Award will be presented to Uvalde Lindsey during the Foundation’s annual Evening on the Plaza Dinner Friday, May 8. North Arkansas College President Dr. Jeff Olson, who will host the dinner, and retired U.S. Rep. John Paul Hammerschmidt will make the presentation.

The Evening on the Plaza Dinner will be held in the L.E. “Gene” Durand Center at Northark’s Center Campus at 6:30 p.m. It will be preceded by a reception in the FedEx Freight Atrium from 6 to 6:30 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$30 each. For more information, contact Jacquie Markle (391-3159).

The special menu for the evening will include two dinner entrées, roasted red bliss potatoes, vegetable medley, dinner rolls, and cobbler. Musical entertainment will be provided by Gus Smith, George Holcomb, and Roger Williams.

Established in 1990, the Ozarks Ambassador Award is presented to someone from northern Arkansas who has represented the area with distinction nationwide in one or more of the following fields: agriculture, finance, medicine, education, politics, law, business, social services, the ministry, or industry.

Robert M. Eagle of Dallas, TX, was the 1990 recipient. Others include James H. Jones of San Francisco, CA, (1991); David R. Banks of Fort Smith (1992); William P. Stiritz of St. Louis, MO, (1993); James F. Keenan of Palm Beach, FL, (1994); Dr. Ronald C. Jones of Dallas, TX, (1995); Tom and Don Salmon of Little Rock (1996); John Paul Hammerschmidt of Harrison (1997); C.D. Wright of Barrington, RI, (1998); Sheridan Garrison of Harrison (1999); David Perry of Mountain View, Calif., (2000); University of Arkansas Chancellor Dr. John A. White (2002); former Arkansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Jack Holt, Jr., of Little Rock (2003); Northark graduate and former Tyson Foods General Counsel Les Baledge of Fayetteville (2004); John Arthur Hammerschmidt of Washington, D.C., (2006); Ranger Boats founder Forrest Wood of Flippin (2007); and Arkansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Jim Hannah of Little Rock (2008).

The award was not presented in 2001 or 2005. Instead, the Foundation recognized retiring North Arkansas College President Dr. Bill Baker at the BBB Bar-B-Que and Blow-Out in 2001 and honored former Twin Lakes Vocational Technical School Director Weldon Stevenson in 2005.

After high school, the son of Uvalde Roy and Otie Sue (Turney) Lindsey continued his education in Fayetteville and graduated with honors from the University of Arkansas. Sidetracked from his dream of a career as an investment banker by pressing family needs, Uvalde came back to Harrison to run the family's auto parts business.

"A week after graduating from college, I had to make payroll," he says.

Lindsey's growing reputation as an astute businessman led to 10 years of service on the Harrison City Council, including eight years as its finance committee chairman. Along the way, he helped get the "hamburger tax" passed in Harrison to promote tourism in the community. Then, in 1982, Uvalde's life took a dramatic turn.

After selling the auto parts business, which he had grown into 18 stores, to O'Reilly's Auto Parts, Lindsey took a job working on the staff of then-Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton as budget officer during Clinton's second term. Uvalde's first experience working with the state legislature was a good one, although it was a challenging time coming out of a nationwide recession.

Returning home from Little Rock, Lindsey began work serving nine counties in 1985 as executive director the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District. His five years at NWAEDD brought more than \$40 million in federal assistance to rural water systems in the area. He also helped plan U.S. 412, which now passes through Harrison.

Uvalde's efforts on behalf of northwest Arkansas caught the attention of some heavy hitters in the Fayetteville area with last names like Walton, Tyson, and Hunt. After an early meeting with Sam and Helen Walton about the pressing need for infrastructure to keep up with the booming growth in Washington and Benton counties, Lindsey was convinced to move to Fayetteville, create Ozark International Consultants, and go to work in 1990 on behalf of the newly created Northwest Arkansas Council.

Over the next eight years, Lindsey, his beloved second wife, Carol, and other associates, including current XNA administrator Scott Van Laningham and Uvalde's son, Michael, worked to secure funding for a new airport for Northwest Arkansas. By all accounts, Lindsey knew more about FAA rules and regulations by the

end of the process than the government bureaucrats he won over along the way.

"He was our one-man brain trust," says Hammerschmidt, who chaired the Northwest Arkansas Council during Uvalde's last 11 years working with the group.

Lindsey returns the favor, calling Hammerschmidt, whom he has known all of his life, "our guiding star. Really, this has been about the area of the state that was John Paul's former congressional district," Uvalde says. "It's a great area with great people. We think alike, act alike, and work alike. We have great opportunities and, also, a lot of challenges.

"One person doesn't do all of this. This is not a one-man show," he continues. "We can't be successful in Little Rock and Washington without a common voice. We have to be singing from the same hymnal, same page, and same verse—long enough, loud enough, often enough."

That's the type of effort it took to bring XNA to Highfill, and achieve other major goals, like I-540, the four-lane from Springdale to Siloam Springs, and bringing Beaver Lake water to rural Washington and Benton counties.

Uvalde Lindsey to be Honored

Lindsey brings the same kind of commitment to his new job as a member of the Arkansas General Assembly.

"It's been fun," he says of his new role as a legislator. "It's different inside the doors than it is outside. There are two sides to every issue. You're responsible for doing what's right for your district, if you can; for your region, if you can; and for the state, for sure.

"My vote on the cigarette tax was not an easy vote. It didn't seem right to tax 20% of the people to benefit all," he continues. "It seemed like picking on folks. Growing up in Har-

ison, you were taught not to pick on folks. I finally decided to vote 'yes' because the benefit was worth the cost."

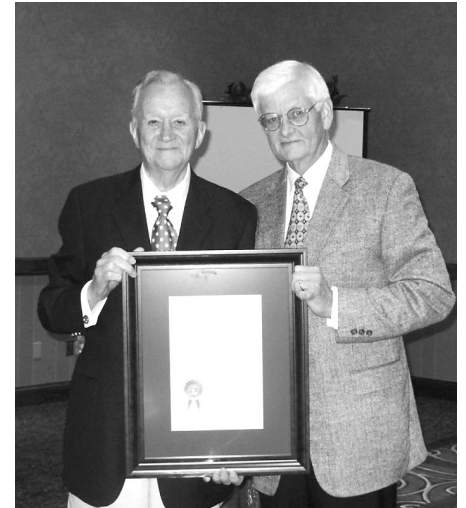
Uvalde, who lost Carol to a heart attack on July 4, 2000, is now married to her best friend, the former Jo Dodson. Together, they have eight children and 18 grandchildren.

In this latest phase of his life, Lindsey continues to work on behalf of people. And he has a good role model for the job.

"John Paul always took care of people first," he says of Hammerschmidt. "I think that's our challenge today. I hope I can help deliver opportunities

and make people's lives better. I'm interested in getting things done."

For Uvalde Lindsey, it has been his life's work.



U.S. Representative John Paul Hammerschmidt and State Representative Uvalde Lindsey

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 North Arkansas College Foundation, Inc.

1515 Pioneer Drive • Harrison, Arkansas 72601
Phone: (870) 391-3159 • Fax: (870) 391-391-3329

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