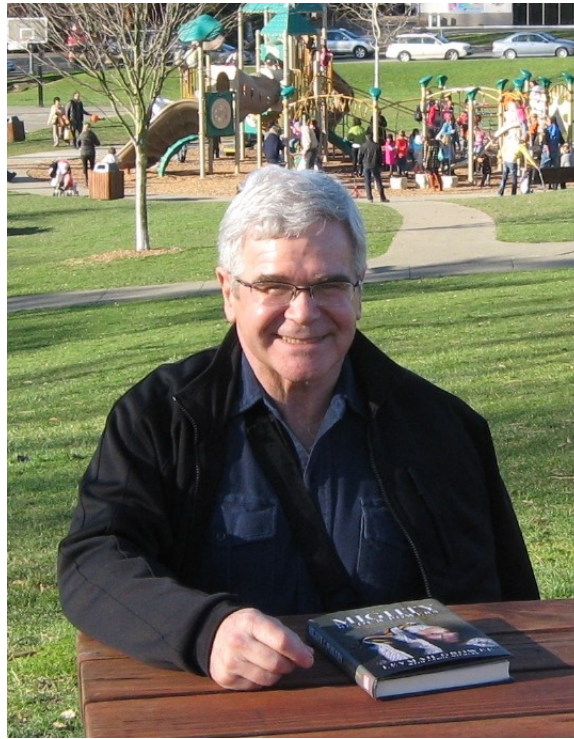


Kirkland Patch  
Feb. 2012  
Karen Story

### **From Pancakes to Legal Advice, Walt Krueger Loves To Serve**

If you attend the Kiwanis “Pancaking to End Homelessness” Breakfast at Peter Kirk Community Center on May 26, your pancakes might be served by Walt Krueger.



The Kingsgate resident is an estate planning lawyer with a very strong social conscience. For him, serving others seems to come as naturally as breathing. Besides serving pancakes to raise money for the homeless, he’s served on numerous charitable, educational, civic and professional boards, and has been providing free legal advice to the needy for over 20 years.

For 14 years, Walt served stints as Treasurer, President, and board member of Kirkland Interfaith Transitions in Housing (KITH), an organization that provides transitional and longer-term housing and support for individuals and families in East King County, many of them women and children escaping domestic violence. Walt was recognized as KITH’s Volunteer of the Year in 2006, and still works hard to help raise funds for them.

He was President of the Board of Trustees of Holy Names Academy for six years and later, of the Holy Family Kirkland School Commission.

Currently, Walt serves on the board of the Kiwanis Club of Kirkland, an organization whose mission is to help children and communities, and is the Immediate Past President.

He's also the service club representative on the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce board, and Secretary for the board of the Mentee Educational Foundation, which is building a desperately-needed school in a village in war-torn Liberia.

In addition, he does legal volunteer work.

For over 20 years he's provided free legal advice to underserved King County residents as a volunteer with The Eastside Legal Assistance Program, from whom he received a Volunteer of the Year Award in 1996. For about 18 years he's also volunteered at the King County Bar Association Bellevue Legal Clinic. He often works with a translator to help non-native English speakers navigate the legal system.

Recently, he began volunteering his legal services at Congregations For the Homeless, an interfaith organization that helps homeless men on the Eastside break the cycle of homelessness and lead a stable and productive life.

On top of all this he's found time to contribute to numerous professional organizations.

He served on the board of the Washington State Trial Lawyers Association (WSTLA) and as Editor-in-Chief of the WSTLA newspaper.

He was Treasurer of the Washington State Bar Association and received their President's Award.

He also chaired several Washington State Bar Court committees, was a Magistrate and Judge *pro tem* in Bellevue District Court, worked as a mediator in a program called Settlement Now, and served as an arbitrator in the King County Superior Court Mandatory Arbitration program.

Where did he get his penchant for civic involvement? With a grin, Walt says "My mom would say it's genetic." Walt grew up in Wenatchee, where his family owned a drive-in restaurant. Although the business kept his parents very busy, his mom found time to be involved in the community.

His early travels may have contributed to his social conscience as well. After a three-year stint in the Army, Walt got his law degree from Gonzaga University in Spokane. His college room mate, Ermel, was from Ecuador. After graduation, Walt journeyed to Ecuador to meet Ermel's family, and ended up spending six months traveling by himself all over South America. "Meeting Ermel, knowing his family, and traveling in South America profoundly affected my life in a wonderful way."

It's obvious that Walt cares deeply about those less fortunate, whether locally or far away. "The Mentee Foundation school is the most exciting thing I've worked on," he says. "The project is serving some of the greatest need in the world."

He'd love to go to Liberia and see the school, but it would be very expensive. With characteristic selflessness, he says "That money would be better spent on the project."

Walt and his wife, Kate, moved to Kirkland 28 years ago, shortly after they went to the hospital expecting one child, and came home with two – a twin son and daughter. Their Seattle home had been burglarized twice in a short time, and Walt says "We decided it was time to move out of the city."

One of the things Walt appreciates about living in Kirkland is that "so many citizens really care about making it a better place."

Walt cares not only about making Kirkland a better place, but making the world a better place too. He thinks his volunteer work has also made him a better person.

"I've learned so much through volunteering," he says. "As a volunteer, you gain knowledge, skills and experiences that you wouldn't get through your regular job. It's so fulfilling."









