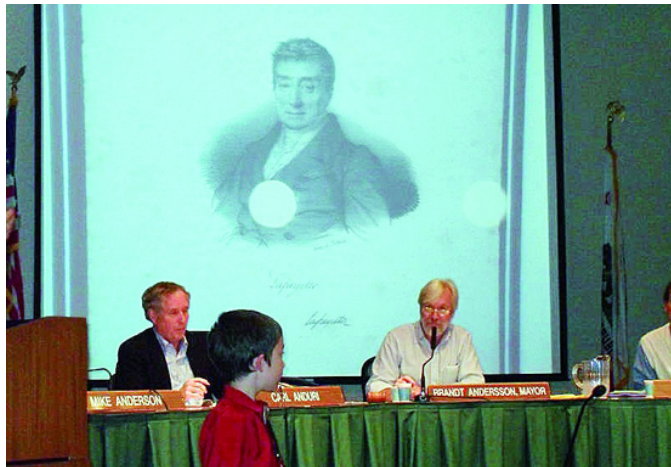


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The Marquis Comes to Town

By Cathy Tyson



Portrait of Marie Joseph du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette (foreground: Noah Sonet) Photo Cathy Tyson

Sonet enjoys the story of the Marquis and believes it's inspirational. A French aristocrat, LaFayette became so inspired by the ideals of the American Revolution that he journeyed overseas and volunteered his military skills. A rich fellow, he could have stayed home and done what was expected of him and lead a life of leisure, but he sought adventure. The young Frenchman became a loyal confidant of George Washington, with whom he shared the hardships of the long winter at Valley Forge. After the American victory, he returned to France - but eventually came back to America where he was hailed as a hero.

Thanks to the kindness of Gilbert Sonet, a portrait of the Marquis de LaFayette will now reside in Lafayette. Although the City has a statue of the Marquis near Plaza Park, this is the first framed version of the handsome French aristocrat.

While on vacation in France, Sonet came across the local version of a garage sale on a street in Paris with a portrait of Marie Joseph du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette by artist Francois Seraphin Delpech circa 1830. He purchased it, brought the image home in his luggage, and had it framed.

With charming son Noah, they graciously presented the framed portrait at a recent City Council meeting as a token of appreciation for the generosity the City has shown the Lamorinda Petanque Club. It will be placed in the Lafayette Library and Learning Center sometime in January.

"I'll echo Carol Federighi in saying that it is great that the first gift of artwork to Lafayette is a portrait of Lafayette. We all appreciate the thoughtfulness of Gilbert and Noah to bring the portrait back from France in honor of their hometown," said Ann Merideth, Community Development Director.

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