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## Mike Anderson wins Lafayette's Ann Denny award



Photo captured March 22 city council meeting

**Council and staff were all smiles as Mike Anderson was honored March 22 with the Ann Denny award.**

**By Pippa Fisher**

Former Mayor Mike Anderson received one of Lafayette's highest honors with the presentation of the Chamber of Commerce's Ann Denny award. And no one was more surprised than the recipient himself!

Acknowledging that the award is

usually given at a public event, President of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce board of directors John McCormick made the presentation at the March 22 city council virtual meeting, saying that "this is as public as we get right now," but that they hope to do more later in the year to recognize Anderson.

The award is named in honor of

former Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ann Denny, who held the position from 1993 until 2005. She passed away in 2015. The discretionary award – one that is not presented every year – was set up to recognize those who have made extraordinary contributions to the community, have shown long-term commitment to the future, have modeled excellence, have helped others achieve, have shown leadership skills that inspire others, and have helped create a vision for the future.

McCormick praised Anderson, noting his 16 years on council and time prior to that on the planning commission, but especially "for his steady leadership throughout a tumultuous 2020, during which time the city faced the coronavirus, wild fires, power outages, demonstrations and multiple business shutdowns and throughout all that he led us with dignity, transparency, common sense, and always with a smile."

Anderson is only the fourth person to receive this award, following in the footsteps of Stanley Middle School Band Director Bob Athayde, former

Police Chief Eric Christensen and former Mayor Don Tatzin.

Lafayette residents Kathy Merchant and Larry Blodgett both spoke of his calm demeanor. "I've never heard a biting comment from you in a public meeting," said Merchant.

Blodgett spoke of Anderson's level-headedness, objectivity, fairness, thoughtfulness, thoroughness, kindness and his unfailingly good-naturedness.

Former Mayor Don Tatzin weighed in too. "I doubt that anyone could have met the moment of the last two years as well as you did," he said.

Members of the council echoed the same sentiments and specifically noted the model of excellence he provided for them.

Anderson himself, clearly very surprised by the award, said he was honored and that he is looking forward to a time when the community will once again be able to gather for events such as Business Person of the Year, and the State of the City address.

"It's the community that moves you forward; that keeps you doing this," he said.

## Day of Hope and Healing

**By Pippa Fisher**

Lafayette City Council participated in a county-wide tribute honoring those who have lost their lives to COVID-19 on the one-year anniversary of the first death from the virus in the county at its March 22 meeting, reflecting on the

milestone with a moment of silence.

Mayor Susan Candell noted that as of that morning 734 county residents had died of COVID-19, and there had been 64,642 confirmed cases in the county. Within Lafayette, as of that morning, there had been four deaths

and 573 confirmed cases. Candell recalled that former Mayor Mike Anderson had declared a local emergency due to the virus on March 15.

Anderson said that he would not have realized the potential for the situation to become so serious but for talking to Council Member

Cam Burks who, he said, "brought the fire to the conversation." Describing Burks as the "essential piece," he said he and City Manager Niroop Srivatsa gained perspective, acting swiftly to declare a local emergency. And he credited former Council Member Steven Bliss who was consistently concerned for those suffering, closing each city council meeting by acknowledging those lives lost and impacted by the virus.

Anderson also credited city staff for a "wonderful approach to keep the city alive," along with Srivatsa's work to employ Townsend Associates to provide help to small busi-

nesses. "It was a well coordinated, positive effort in a circumstance of great, great concern."

Candell also expressed her gratitude to city staff and extended that message to all grocery stores, businesses and restaurants, and said she is looking forward to reopening.

Candell said that in good news, the tier metrics are all going down. "More than 500,000 doses have been issued county-wide with 17,000 doses given in Lafayette alone," she said. She urged everyone to get vaccinated.

And with that the council observed a moment's silence.

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