

The Stump

Honoring Fred Rosenbaum at Camp Rilea

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Fred Rosenbaum, as former Gov. Barbara Roberts told the assembly at Camp Rilea Wednesday, has been accorded a lot of honors for his long list of achievements. But the dedication of the Garden of Gratitude in his name has to rank near the top.

Rosenbaum, then an Oregon Air National Guard officer, persuaded Gov. Tom McCall to launch a summer camp for at-risk kids at Camp Rilea. That was 39 years ago.

On Wednesday, under threatening skies, a gathering of people touched by Rosenbaum's life watched him watch the unveiling of a granite marker outside one of the camp buildings used for the summer camp. The attendees ranged from retired military officers to kids attending this year's camp. Gresham's mayor was there. Housing authority officials from various counties were there. Two former governors were there. And so were three generations of Rosenbaums.

It was a scene marvelous in its Americanness. Rosenbaum, who escaped the Holocaust as a child in prewar Austria, flanked by a Syrian-American former governor, Oregon's first female governor, kids from poor neighborhoods and men and women in camouflage uniforms. No other country, Rosenbaum said Wednesday, as he has many times before, would have adopted an immigrant of Jewish Europe, and given him the opportunity to rise to the rank of general in the Air National Guard, the chairman of the Housing Authority of Portland, the president of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and an associate national commissioner of the Anti-Defamation League, among other things.

Rosenbaum, now in his 80s and battling cancer, is an Oregon treasure, along with other members of his family. (His wife, Jane, was instrumental in establishing the stunning Holocaust Memorial in Washington Park and his son Mark recently finished a term as chairman of the Portland Development Commission.)

Fred Rosenbaum has given Oregon and his adopted country every bit as much as they have given him.



Mike Francis / The Oregonian

From left, Gov. Vic Atiyeh, Gov. Barbara Roberts, Chaplain Rick Sirianni and BG Fred Rosenbaum at the dedication ceremony Wednesday.

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