

# Wilbur Ternyik, Founding Father of Coastal Planning

January 26, 1926 - April 2, 2018



At the age of 92, Wilbur Earl Ternyik, one of Oregon's most influential citizens, died in Florence, Oregon.

Wilbur was a descendant of Chief Coboway, the Clatsop Indian Chief who hosted the Lewis and Clark Expedition during the winter of 1805/1806. His mother was a full-blooded member of the Clatsop Tribe. Throughout his life Wilbur proudly identified with his Native American heritage.

The signature accomplishment of Wilbur's life was the key role he played as the Chairman of the Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission (OCC&DC). Wilbur, working closely with Governor Tom McCall, took the lead persuading his fellow coastal leaders to undertake "coastal planning."

By all accounts, Ternyik was the driving force behind that historic effort. Too few Oregonians know that the groundbreaking work of the OCC&DC - started in 1970 - set the stage to establish Oregon's statewide land use planning system through the passage of Senate Bill 100 in 1973. The work of OCC&DC also had a national impact and played a vital role in the passage of the federal Coastal Zone

Management Act (CZMA) in 1972.

Wilbur spent over 60 years running his business, Wave Beach Grass Nursery, where he gained international recognition for dune stabilization. He also did groundbreaking work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others on dune management, wetland restoration, and estuarine eelgrass restoration. While an avid hunter and trapper during his early life, Wilbur spent his later years nurturing abandoned and injured wildlife at his home in Florence.

Wilbur served on the Port of Siuslaw for 29 years, the Florence City Council for 16 years, and as Mayor for Florence for two terms. Through his lifetime, Wilbur maintained active participation with the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribe in Warrenton, advocating for tribal recognition.

As a World War II veteran, he received the Purple Heart for injuries he received at Okinawa.

Wilbur was recognized as First Citizen in Florence in 1971, was honored by Senator Mark O. Hatfield and The Bridges Foundation in 2005-2006 in Seaside and in Florence with a bronze statue crafted by Lorenzo Ghiglieri. Wilbur's bronze and history of his achievements is at the Florence Pioneer Museum. Wilbur was honored by Senator Arnie Roblan at the Oregon House of Representatives in 2009.

A memorial service was held on April 29, 2018 at Florence Events Center. Wilbur is survived by his wife of 55 years, Joyce Ann, his four children, 14 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Donations honoring Wilbur Ternyik's legacy can be made to the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribe, ([www.clatsop-nehalem.com](http://www.clatsop-nehalem.com)) or to Shriner's Hospital in Portland.

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