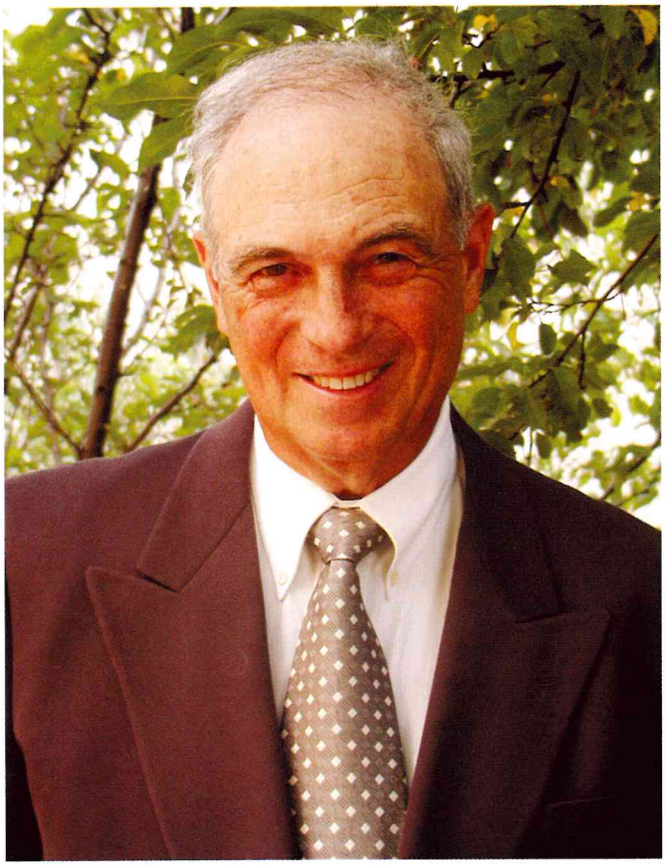

Harvey Feldman was inducted into the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. Membership in the Academy is limited to 125 practicing professionals.

# Passionate About Parks and Recreation

by Kylie Blanchard

## Harvey Feldman Honored with Induction into the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration

Harvey Feldman is passionate about parks and recreation. With an impressive résumé, including 34 years as a parks and recreation administrator in the state of Minnesota and 10 years as a teaching specialist at the University of Minnesota, it is easy to believe he is dedicated to the profession.

"I have always — from the beginning of time it seems — believed parks and recreation could improve the lives of people," Feldman said. "That was my motivation then, and it remains my motivation today."

Feldman was recently honored for his dedication with an induction into the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA). Founded in 1980, the AAPRA is made up of the top 125 practicing parks and recreation professionals in the nation.

According to the AAPRA Web site (www.aapra.org), the Academy strives "to advance knowledge related to the administration of recreation and parks; to encourage scholarly efforts … that would enhance the practice of parks and administration; to promote broader public understanding of park and recreation…; and to conduct research, publish scholarly papers, and sponsor seminars related to the advancement of parks and recreation administration."

Now, it is in conjunction with the goals of the AAPRA that Feldman can continue to live out his passion for the field. "He certainly deserved to be one of those top 125 [professionals] in the country," said Ernest Burkeen, director of parks and recreation in Miami, Florida. Burkeen is an Academy member and nominated Feldman for his membership.

"It's a real badge of honor to work in public service for 30 years," Burkeen said of Feldman's dedication. "He has tremendous vision."

Burkeen also emphasized another outstanding trait of Feldman's. "I think he is a very caring individual. He really cares about people," Burkeen said. "And to be a success in this business, you really have to care about people."

Academy membership was an honor some felt was overdue for Feldman. In a letter of support for Feldman's induction, Dr. John Crompton, distinguished professor at Texas A&M University and AAPRA member, wrote: "[Feldman's] admission to membership is long overdue given his stellar record of 9 years as assistant director for Minneapolis, his active leadership role in NRPA for many years, and most recently, his reincarnation as an educator at a major university."

Crompton continued to emphasize Feldman's never-ending work to promote the profession and its beliefs. "His fire, commitment and belief together with his experience, are the kind of talent we need in the Academy if it is to be a 'doing' academy rather than merely an 'honorary' academy," Crompton wrote.

Dr. Keith Russell, associate professor and coordinator of the recreation, park and leisure program at the University of Minnesota, agrees. "I think [the Academy membership] was one of those things that was long overdue," Russell said. "He's spent his whole career advocating for the values of parks and recreation. Without his contributions, I don't know where the field would be."

Steven Neu, former National Recreation and Park Association president and director of parks and recreation in Bismarck, North Dakota, said Feldman has made many contributions to the field. "Harvey's contributions have been twofold," Neu said of Feldman's many years of service as a practitioner and an educator. According to Neu, it doesn't matter in what capacity Feldman is serving — he is strengthening the field of parks and recreation.

"[Feldman has] always had a great desire to give back to the profession," Neu said. "And he's continuing to give back in his present position." Neu is also an Academy member and said it is an honor to work in the profession with Feldman. "He's a true professional," Neu said. "It's an honor being a fellow member of the Academy with Harvey."

Feldman said he is very honored by the nomination, the letters of support and the induction into the Academy. "I was, first, very honored," Feldman said. "It's kind of recognition of my efforts in my career to be the best I can be and to provide quality services to the people I serve."

Feldman's passion for parks and recreation continues to grow, and he knows the Academy will only enhance enthusiasm. "I'm not about to stop challenging and sharing my views on how we can make our profession better," Feldman said. "I plan to continue to be a vital force in the parks and recreation movement." ■


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