



G. Randolph "Randy" Worls - *Public Service*

Randy Worls, chief executive officer of the Oglebay Foundation and the Parks System Trust Fund of Wheeling.

Worls served as CEO of the Wheeling Park Commission for 27 years and during his tenure, dozens of major capital improvements were undertaken, the park commission's operating budget increased from \$4 million to over \$20 million per year, the staff increased from 325 people to over 1,000 employees and the local parks became the nation's premier public park system. He has been involved in acquiring over \$75 million for capital improvements, special programs and endowments for the park commission.

As a founder of the Winter Festival of Lights, he helped create Wheeling's major tourism attraction.

Physical improvements added on his watch range from the arboretum walk system to indoor tennis and riding centers, the waterslide to soccer fields, miniature golf courses to Cascading Waters. The Robert C. Byrd Addition to Wilson Lodge, Sonneborn and Levenson shelters, Harry C. Hamm Clubhouse, Ihlenfeld Dining Room, Bissonnette Gardens, Good Zoo and Benedum Natural Science Theater, Arnold Palmer Design golf course, Carriage House Glass facility, enclosed White Palace with Youth Center and dozens of new and renovated guest cabins became realities while he headed the commission.

Oglebayfest, the West Virginia LPGA Classic from 1974 through 1984, the American Heritage Crafts Festival, the Albert Schenk Salute to Patriotism, the Junior Golf Program at Oglebay and the Access to the Parks program all were started under Worls's leadership.

After six years as a student employee, Worls became a full-time Wheeling Park Commission employee in June 1960, serving as director of activities. In 1966, he became assistant general manager and in 1972 was appointed as the CEO of the Wheeling Park Commission and the Parks System Trust Fund of Wheeling. In 1994, the job of Oglebay Foundation CEO was added to his duties. In spring 1999, Worls was asked to undertake the full-time effort of creating a long-term maintenance endowment fund for the Wheeling parks and took on a full-time position as the CEO of the Oglebay Foundation and the Parks System Trust Fund. He earned a bachelor's degree from the College of Wooster and a master's

in park administration and recreation from West Virginia University. He also graduated from two of the professional continuing education schools conducted annually at Oglebay Park: the Maintenance Management School and the Revenue Sources Management School, which he has continued to serve as an instructor for 30 years. He is a nationally recognized authority on public parks' revenue production and has served numerous organizations, including the U.S. Senate, as a consultant. His many awards have included induction into the WVU School of Physical Education Hall of Fame in 1998.

A regional, state and national leader in the travel and tourism industry, Worls is a member of the Wheeling Convention and Visitors Bureau and served that group as president from 1980 to 1994.

He is a trustee of the prestigious Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation in Pittsburgh, was executive director of the American Institute for Leisure Resources for 12 years and was chairman of the WHEELING 2000 Committee. Born in Wheeling on July 12, 1938, the son of the late George R. and Kate Worls, he and his wife, Betty Booth Worls, have adult twin sons, Brad and Brent, and one granddaughter, Tiffany.

Worls is the first to attribute his successes to the park commissioners for whom he has worked and the benefactors and public-spirited citizens who have been his mentors. He easily gives credit for the wonders of Oglebay and Wheeling Park to others who have worked closely with him, to facilities managers and to the staff members who plant the flowers, prepare the food, do the mailings, direct the traffic, take the tickets, sell the souvenirs, develop the programs, interact with guests and keep the parks sparkling.

Whenever someone from Wheeling starts to brag about the city, the park system invariably is the first local asset cited. Surely the name of Randy Worls belongs on that list of community assets as well.