

■ Dedication Ceremony

Henson Plaza commemorates former councilor's 'persistence'

WILL CHAPPELL
Headlight Editor

A group of Tillamook residents gathered on June 7, to officially dedicate the pedestrian plaza in downtown Tillamook the Doug Henson Plaza, in honor of the longtime community fixture who passed in 2024.

"We're here today to honor Doug Henson," said Nick Torres who is Tillamook County's Veterans Service Officer and a Tillamook City Councilor. "Doug did so much for the community and individuals of this community, this plaza is just one of many projects Doug brought to the city."

The pedestrian plaza between Pacific and Main Avenues on Second Street in Tillamook was initially converted from a functional street into its current form in 2017, as part of a larger, \$28-million rethinking of downtown Tillamook's traffic flow with the installation of a new bridge over the Hoquarton Slough.

Previously unnamed, Tillamook's city council voted in May of last year to name the plaza the Doug Henson Plaza in honor of their former colleague who had passed the previous month.

Henson was born on May 18, 1948, in Salem, before moving as a young child to Tillamook County and attending the Neah-Kah-Nie School District. After serving in the Army from 1967 to 1969, including combat duty in Vietnam where he received multiple medals. Henson returned to Tillamook determined to make a positive impact in his community.

Following a stint at the Tillamook County YMCA, Henson opened a sporting goods store in Tillamook and took up coaching and refereeing for youth sports in his free time.

In 2003, Henson was elected to the city council, serving until 2006 when he resigned to run for mayor and campaign in support of a veteran's services levy, before returning for a second term beginning in 2011. During his time on the council, Henson spearheaded a wide range of initiatives, including serving as a founding member of the Tillamook Revitalization Association,



Headlight photos by Joe Warren

(Top) A crowd gathered to dedicate the Doug Henson Plaza in a special ceremony in the Plaza the former councilor worked to bring to Tillamook.
(Bottom) Doug's wife Katherine Meurer, unveils the plaque the city installed naming the Plaza, Doug Henson Plaza after her late husband.

helping to start the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and Farmer's Market in downtown Tillamook, pushing to get playground equipment installed at Goodspeed Park and, fittingly, creating the Second Street pedestrian plaza.

In one of the final acts of his public life, Henson led the effort to bring a veterans' memorial to downtown Tillamook, successfully raising more than \$200,000 in support of the project in 2023. Henson passed before he could see his vision brought to life, but Tillamook City Councilor Nick Torres assumed leadership following Henson's passing and the memorial was installed on the triangular property between First Street and Pacific and Main Avenues.

At the dedication ceremony, Torres,



Headlight photo by Joe Warren

Tillamook Public Works employee Connor Brown installs the plaque commemorating former Tillamook City Councilor Doug Henson.

HENSON
from

From Page A1

Tillamook Public Works Director and Oregon Senator Suzanne Weber spoke during the ceremony.

"There are so many examples in our community that remind us of Doug," Weber said. "He was a

tremendous, persistence person, who cared for this community, who did so much for Tillamook, he was a good man and a good friend. Doug loved Tillamook, this was a labor of love."