

Tim and Teresa Myrick - honored for service and philanthropy

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on June 6, 2014)

This *Historically Speaking* column is gladly dedicated to the history that is being created as we speak. This unique "happening" in our community is something to which I am most proud to lend my support.

Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County breaks ground Saturday for the Myrick Build house in Heiskell, honoring Tim and Teresa Myrick for their many contributions to the community.

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, and friends of the Myricks have pledged or contributed more than \$60,000 to the build. Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties (ADFAC) has offered to help by contributing a lighting package, a volunteer work day from their employees, and services to the family based on their income. Downtown Hardware has offered needed hardware materials.

To contribute to the Myrick Build, please send checks to:

Myrick Build/Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County
111 Randolph Road
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

To volunteer, or for more information on contributing, call the Habitat office at (865) 482-7713. You can also contribute online at: www.hfhac.org

This column was written by Kay Brookshire.

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A new Habitat for Humanity build in Heiskell honors a man and his wife whose acts of philanthropy have touched many lives.

Those who work and volunteer with Tim Myrick say he brings a passion for the environment, great organizational skills, an ability to bring people together, and a desire to help those in need to the professional, community and international projects that have filled his life.

Jeff Smith, Deputy Director for Operations at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, made it a point to meet Myrick at the recommendation of a local consultant when Smith arrived in Oak Ridge as part of the UT-Battelle team managing the lab.

"As I got to know him, I thought he had the capability and certainly the interest in doing something significant for the lab. I asked if he would be willing to step out of the environmental management program and take on the role of project manager for the facilities revitalization program," Smith recalled.

Myrick agreed, executing details that included developing a master plan, working with the architect, moving people to and from facilities so that buildings could be demolished and construction could begin. Myrick guided the \$350 million modernization undertaken by UT-Battelle at ORNL in the early 2000s.

His skills and reputation as a person who could get things done also helped to erode the skepticism within the lab that this new contractor, UT-Battelle, could keep its promise to modernize the lab, Smith added.

"Tim was absolutely essential to the modernization of the lab," Smith said. "He is highly organized. He is a good project manager. He knows how to get things done. He knew the

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laboratory. He could go touch the right people and get the right kind of information. He is just good with people.”

Herb Debban, Director of Facilities and Operations at ORNL before his semi-retirement in 2010, said Myrick exceeded expectations as he managed the modernization, which removed 1.8 million square feet of space and replaced it with 1.25 million square feet in new buildings.

“The laboratory has gone from one of the oldest to one of the absolute newest of the national laboratories. Tim’s footprint is all over that development. And then the community – he has been the catalyst to get many people involved in activities,” said Debban.

Myrick’s work at ORNL propelled him to a new project involving Oak Ridge High School, and new volunteer roles, as well. With the high school facing serious structural issues, ORNL offered to help not only with raising funds but also with leadership talent to guide the complicated renovation and rebuilding effort.

“Because of Tim’s track record here, we knew he was well suited for that. And because of Tim’s commitment to the community, he was eager to do that,” Smith said. Myrick served first as a loaned executive from ORNL on the \$61 million Oak Ridge High School renovation and rebuilding project. He retired from the lab in 2004 and continued to serve as a volunteer consultant on the high school project until its completion in 2008, devoting nearly five years to the effort.

“His key contribution there was really coming up with the whole strategy that worked in Oak Ridge,” said Thom Mason, Director of ORNL. Myrick was the facilitator who brought together teachers, students, administrators, architects and the community, resulting in a plan to renovate and rebuild the high school that had broad support.

Noting his passion for designing the high school with environmental concerns and energy savings in mind, former science teacher Nita Ganguly invited him to help with an advance placement environmental sciences class once a week. Myrick accepted and has served as a volunteer teacher and mentor to students since 2008.

“He provides real world insight from his experience, conducts a couple of lectures each year, and helps each week with labs and activities. Students love him!” Deni Sobek, current AP environmental sciences teacher, said. “He is the best person in the building to discuss curriculum, labs and projects with. He is also a friend whose help and support are invaluable.”

That experience opened another path for Myrick to give back to the community. He noticed that teachers’ needs in classrooms and labs are often greater than budgets allow and that some very motivated students need help with college expenses.

He and his wife Teresa made a \$25,000 gift to the Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation’s grants campaign, with \$15,000 designated for ORHS Science Department grants and \$10,000 for scholarships. Last year, the grant provided lab equipment and digital cameras for microscopes. The gift provides a \$1,000 scholarship to an AP environmental sciences student each year for 10 years.

“He just adopts people and projects where he sees he can help out,” said Mason, the ORNL Director who also serves as chairman of the Education Foundation. He credits Myrick with “that big picture thinking, seeing what is the right thing to do, and getting it done,” as he did with both ORNL modernization and the high school.

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Myrick earlier provided scholarships locally and internationally through Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties, where, according to Executive Director Annie Cacheiro, he has been a cornerstone and inspiration as a volunteer for many years.

"Tim has guided us through a strategic planning process. He's recruited board members, guided staff through difficult waters, been a generous donor, but above all, he's been a cheerleader for us all the time," Cacheiro said. "He's hammered many nails, hung plenty of dry wall and stood on top of homes, working on the roof, for years."

Among lives he's touched are those of 47 families, living in rural Appalachian areas, who now have clean water for the first time, explained Cindy Ross, Director of ADFAC's Affordable Housing Program.

Myrick, a board member with Living Waters for the World, introduced ADFAC to the organization's approach of creating partnerships between volunteers and communities to provide sustainable clean water where needed. He sought grants and led volunteers to install clean water systems for the 47 families, who repaid a portion of the work, helping to establish a revolving loan fund for the project, Ross added.

Myrick has traveled to Belize and Haiti to install clean water systems with mission groups with Living Waters, which had installed more than 500 of the systems internationally by its 20th anniversary last year.

"Think of the things that wouldn't exist if he wasn't here. Tim is that kind of individual. I don't think the modernized high school would be what it is if Tim hadn't stepped in that role," Smith said. And without him, Smith isn't sure the national lab transformation would have been successful. "Tim just did an outstanding job of delivering the vision we had."

Among his volunteer efforts, Myrick has helped build each of the 58 houses that Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County has built since 1992. Teresa Myrick has worked on Habitat Women's Builds, and she has supported and joined in Myrick's community service.

ORNL is donating \$10,000 to the Habitat build in honor of Myrick, encouraging lab staff to contribute also. The Habitat build will take place on Valley View Lane, near the Myrick's home. There, volunteers will build a new home to Energy Star standards for a family who will buy the house with sweat equity, a low down payment and a 0% interest mortgage.

One more family in need, a few more lives changed, in honor of the service, humanity and philanthropy of Tim and Teresa Myrick.

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Thank you Kay for an excellent insight into the marvelous contributions of Tim and Teresa Myrick!

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My heroes...Tim and Teresa Myrick!



Tim Myrick has worked on EVERY SINGLE house built by Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County!

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Regardless of the task, Tim has been known to undertake them all

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Tim and Teresa delight in seeing yet another family get a home!



Tim and Teresa as the Myrick Build was announced recently at the Y-12 New Hope Center