



**TMLIRP is committed to providing risk management services and a full suite of liability, property, and workers' compensation coverages to Texas cities and other public entities. The Pool's Board of Trustees is comprised of municipal officials from across the state of Texas.**

**For the latest installment of "Meet a Trustee," the Pool interviewed Trustee David Harris. David is the City Administrator of Balcones Heights.**



Looking for a more service-oriented and compassionate guy than David Harris? You won't find him. David's the kind who has a warm greeting for everyone in a room. His enthusiasm is infectious, and his perfectly-timed and good-natured wit always brings a smile.

David's face lights up (even more than usual) when he talks about public service. It's fitting that, of the Risk Pool's Core Values (Public Service, Integrity, Fiscal Responsibility, and Operational Excellence), he said this: "They are all important, but it all comes down to service. We are in the business of helping each other, whether it's at church, the city, or the Pool." According to David, the other values flow from public service. Our integrity is all we have in this world and maintaining the public trust and keeping things running well are operational requirements.

"After all, we are dealing with human beings and their lives." That's why the Pool's mission is so meaningful to him. He explains that it goes to the core of why he got involved in government. A desire to give back to the community. According to David, "A person can't succeed in this business without a 'servant's heart.'"

Similarly, city management was a calling for him from a young age. "Growing up in San Antonio, I loved reading the newspaper and watching on T.V. the cool things Henry Cisneros (mayor at the time) and Lou Fox (city manager then) did all across the community." David comes from a long line of family members who have served local government, including two sheriffs, a district attorney, many public school teachers, and a school superintendent. He describes local government as "the business of bettering the human condition." An example? Sewer service. Without it, we could not have urban density. And in an urban society, if it doesn't go "bye-bye" when a citizen flushes, we will hear about it!

How did he come to serve on the Pool's Board of Trustees? Unsurprisingly, through his vast network of friends in the business. When he worked at the City of Schertz, his Parks Department was led by George Logan. George was (and is) married to Margaret Reeves. Margaret is an attorney who managed the Pool's subrogation efforts.

Through Margaret, he also met David Reagan, the Board of Trustee's General Counsel. "George and I would be out playing golf and he'd say, 'you need to be on this board.'" What started as a conversation became reality in 2018. After David Harris' term as President of the Texas City Management Association (TCMA), Harris ran against Bridge City Mayor David Rutledge. (Lots of Davids in this story!). True-to-



form, Harris explained that “I couldn’t have won out over a nicer guy!” Mayor Rutledge went on to become the Texas Municipal League President in 2021, and Harris was elected as a Pool Trustee in 2018.

Even in his early years, he knew he wanted to be a public servant. While in high school, he worked at the school’s newspaper. He appreciated local government and the good that comes from it. He chose his father’s *alma mater* – Whitworth University – for college. The small liberal arts school in Spokane, Washington, was a natural fit. David was elected student-body President his sophomore year. He likes to point out that he actually did run for an elected office – and he won!

During his interview, David told a story that speaks to his compassion for others. The student government at Whitworth had one employee. She was an executive assistant who did much more than that. David described her as “the face of student government” because everyone knew her from her duties in the student union. He, as student-body President, had to cast a deciding vote to eliminate her position. The decision, which wasn’t really a choice due to budgetary concerns, still brings tears to his eyes. “I had to make that call and it stuck with me because, in the end, everything we do affects someone.” In fact, when the pandemic began, Balcones Heights had to cut back some positions. Now, “we all wear many hats to make things work.”

Prior to landing in public service, David spent some time in the tourism industry. After his junior year in college, David went to Alaska to work for Gray Line of Alaska (a division of Holland America Line) as a tour guide, which required him to operate a commercial motor coach. In fact, his skill as a driver nabbed him an award as Anchorage Bus Rodeo champion in 1991!

Even though David spent time up north in Alaska and Washington, he returned home to pursue his M.S. in Urban Administration at Trinity University. He is a native Texan, moving from Fort Worth to San Antonio in 1972. His father was a lawyer. Originally with the National Labor Relations Board, he later represented Southwest Airlines. His mother, a teacher, focused on raising him and his younger brother, Stephen. His brother, brother’s family, and his parents now live in Fredericksburg, but frequently visit their vacation home in Placerville, Colorado, near Telluride.

Although he is a Texan at heart, he takes every opportunity to visit his family and Colorado! Family is extremely important to David, and if he could go have a meal with anyone today, he would choose his grandparents for one more opportunity to just sit down and chat with them.

So what does David do when he’s not serving the great citizens of Balcones Heights? He’s very active in St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in San Antonio. He also loves to play golf but insists he’s not very good at it. He loves his rescue dogs and admits he’s very good at that! David lives with his partner, Andrew, and their dogs, in Schertz.