

Meet Mayor Pat

Pat and his wife, Sallie, have lived in Highlands for 22 years. But the journey here started with another career in another city. After a stint in the US Army and six years as a public-school teacher, Pat had a 24-year career as a University Professor and Administrator. In addition to teaching responsibilities, he developed several academic programs and secured funding for school facilities. Pat was one of the longest serving department chairs in the history of Kennesaw State University. After moving to Highlands, he began his second career - that of a potter. Pat developed his artistic skills and became the first potter in residence at the Bascom Visual Arts Center. He still owns his pottery business and sells his creations in Main Street shops in Highlands.

Some of the accomplishments Mayor Pat is most proud of include the rebuilding and refurbishing of the recreation department facilities and the building of facilities at Founders Park. He worked in collaboration with Macon County and private donors to bring those projects to fruition. He implemented the first BearWise program in North Carolina and led the team to refurbish the Lake Sequoyah Dam for the first time since 1929. This helped to ensure ample water service for Highlands for years to come. He was awarded the Dogwood Award by NC Attorney General Josh Stein for his advocacy for health care access in Western Carolina and his commitment to assure the operation of small, rural hospitals in the Mission system. His leadership resulted in the doubling of the guaranteed operation of the hospital from 5 years to ten.

Community involvement has always been important to Pat. He has been a Rotarian for fifteen years, served on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Highlands Greenway, the Fidelia Eckerd Board and a member of the American Legion Post 370. As Mayor, Pat represents Highlands on the North Carolina League of Municipalities, and the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission where he is the current chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee. He is also a member of the North Carolina Mayors Association.

As Pat says, "I learned in the military to stand up, step forward and always faithfully do my duty. That principal guides me everyday in executing the duties of Mayor." Pat and Sallie have two children, two grandchildren and a rescue pup named Lucy.