

CREATING AN ISLAND OF CIVILITY

On December 31, 2002, after over 20 years of service to the Washington State Convention & Trade Center, James R. Ellis retired as Chairman of the Board.

Jim led the planning for the operationally and architecturally award-winning original Convention Center facility and kept the project alive when private partners went bankrupt. Despite the many tribulations of such a massive and difficult undertaking, the Center opened on time and on budget. Jim continued at the helm through the Center's two subsequent expansions, positioning it for future success in the highly competitive meetings industry.

Through prudent financial management, more than \$160 million in net cash flow to the state has been produced by the Center since 1988, from over 2.2 billion dollars that have gone into the region's economy directly from convention-related spending.

Jim was instrumental in siting the Center over Interstate 5, which, with Freeway Park, rejoined the First Hill and downtown neighborhoods. He insisted that the Center's design blend comfortably into the community and not dominate it. Jim worked hard with fellow board members to achieve his vision of making the Convention Center an "island of civility" that would be accessible to all.

Today, as a result, the Center has many public areas that are welcoming and comfortable. Art adorns every level of the facility. Hundreds of free concerts, exhibitions and educational programs have been presented. His concern for the community went well beyond what many would have considered the Center's obligation by adding over 1,000 new, long-term affordable housing units to replace the 288 units that were demolished to make way for the construction of the Center.

In countless ways, Jim's hard work has made Washington a better place to live for each and every one of us.



Site of the
Washington
State
Convention &
Trade Center

< 1983

Today >

