

Celebrating the life of
Mayor John Engen

October 27, 1964 - August 15, 2022



August 20, 2022

*Celebrating the lasting legacy
of Missoula's 50th and longest-serving Mayor*

OGREN PARK AT ALLEGIANCE FIELD

700 CREGG LANE
MISSOULA, MONTANA 59801



Obituary

John Engen, Missoula's 50th and longest-serving mayor was known for his wit, his vision for the future of a progressive Missoula and his dedication to its middle class.

Born in Missoula in 1964, Engen was a product of Willard Grade School, Hellgate High School and the University of Montana. He enjoyed a career in print journalism, was a partner in two small businesses and served a term as a Missoula City Council member before being elected mayor for the first time in 2005. He served from January 2006 until his death.

Engen's accomplishments range from comprehensive planning efforts to ensure that Missoula is a compact, sustainable city to restoring the city's once-private water system to public ownership. He was a champion of conservation efforts, a partner in battling hunger and homelessness and a proponent of thoughtful business development.

He championed two open space bonds during his tenure, believing that the preservation of lands around the city for recreation, well-being and good stewardship was key. Engen believed that recreational and cultural infrastructure were crucial to economic development. Missoula today is one of the nation's most desirable places to live.

The Mayor was also a champion of nonprofits, believing that collaborative partnerships between local government and the effort and commitment of residents led to a better city for all. Engen's leadership set the tone for Missoula's welcoming of refugees from around the world.

Engen served on a variety of local and national advisory boards. As a volunteer auctioneer, he helped raise millions of dollars for nonprofit organizations in Western Montana. A friend of the Humane Society of Western Montana, he was rescued again and again by adopted dogs and cats.

He enjoyed cooking for friends, making people laugh and doing great work with smart people.

“He’s smart, honest, decent, compassionate, fair, thoughtful, innovative, collaborative, tough, wise, humble, and human. Frankly, folks, I think he could be a Missoulian.”

John Engen, endorsing Senator Barack Obama for President

Order of Service

MASTER OF CEREMONY

Gwen Jones, Acting Mayor

GUEST SPEAKERS

Former Montana Gov. Steve Bullock

Former Missoula Mayor Mike Kadas

United Way of Missoula County CEO Susan Hay Patrick

Former Montana Senate Majority Leader Carol Williams

and former U.S. Congressman Pat Williams

U.S. Sen. Jon Tester

City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler

Mike Bellusci, long-time friend

MUSIC

Big Sky Mudflaps, featuring David Horgan, Beth Lo, Rich Brinkman,

Chuck Florence, Jim Rogers and guests

Steve Robertson, Bagpipes

With gratitude

Lucy Beighle and family

The Engen Family

The Missoulian

Missoula Invest Health

Missoula Current

Montana Public Radio

Damon Ristau

The Good Food Store

Matt Ellis and the Missoula Paddleheads organization



"At the end of my life, if I can look back, I will have taken some pride in the shiny and the cool and the new, but I will care more about the folks who suffered less, or not at all, because we were able to work together."

-John Engen

