

Fairfax Honors Retired City Manager Sisson

City Hall Annex atrium will be named after him.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

For more than a quarter century, Bob Sisson has done Fairfax proud as its city manager. And last Wednesday, July 11, friends, residents and dignitaries gathered in Old Town Hall for a special reception in his honor.

Sisson, 67, retired June 30, and Assistant City Manager David Hodgkins became acting city manager, the next day. He was among those feting Sisson and singing his praises. But first came U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), who also presented Sisson with a certificate of recognition from the U.S. House of Representatives.

Then Fairfax Mayor David Meyer and some members of the City Council took the podium, where Meyer announced that the atrium inside the City Hall Annex will be named in Sisson's honor. Former and cur-



Two mayors and a city manager: From left, John Mason and David Meyer present Bob Sisson (center) with the prestigious Fairfax Award.

rent Council members Jeff Greenfield and Janice Miller, respectively, organized the event along with City Clerk Melanie Crowder.

"Bob's served with 25 people on the City Council and those who were mayors," said Miller. "The 17 of us still living gathered recently [at a local restaurant] to celebrate

his years of service. And it's nice to see so many people come out tonight and express their appreciation for a man who's done such a good job for us."

State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), who also previously served on City Council, thanked Sisson for "making Fairfax City such a great place to live." Then Fairfax Police Chief Carl Pardiny, Capt. Craig Buckley and Sgt. Ronnie Lewis of the City of Fairfax Police Assn. gave Sisson an engraved award made of crystal, on behalf of the Police Department.

"Bob's overseen five police chiefs in the City, and we're here today to celebrate his remarkable, long career," said Pardiny. Noting that Sisson is "never satisfied with the status quo," Pardiny said Sisson always asked him "really good questions" about police policy, and most began with the word, "Why." And, he added, "We thank him for his service and commitment to the Police Department and public safety."

NEXT TO SPEAK was former Fairfax Mayor John Mason, who headed the team that selected Sisson as city manager. "Most SEE CITY, PAGE 10

Backpacks, Calculators Needed for Students

Help Britepaths provide them to local schools.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Many parents in Fairfax County struggle daily to pay the bills, feed their families and, maintain a roof over their heads. So it's no wonder that the financial obligations each new school year brings can fill them with dread.

But that's where Fairfax-based, nonprofit Britepaths and Fairfax County come in. Together, they provide backpacks filled with school supplies to some 2,500 students at 16 elementary, middle and high schools – six of them in City of Fairfax.

However, with so many students in need, it's a daunting task – which they can only accomplish with the community's help. And with classes starting next month, Britepaths' annual backpack/calculators drive is already underway.

So, said Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel, "We're seeking volunteers from the community to donate funds, backpacks and calculators to assist students in need as part of the county's annual Collect for Kids Back to School Program."

Locally, Britepaths' efforts will help stu-



IT Manager James Yglesias of STEM excel in Fairfax is ready to receive donated backpacks and calculators for Britepaths to distribute to local schools for students in need.

dents attending the following schools in Fairfax: Daniel's Run Elementary, Lanier Middle School, Fairfax High School, Bonnie Brae Elementary, Fairfax Villa Elementary and Oak View Elementary. In 2017, Britepaths furnished backpacks and school supplies to 2,540 students.

Area residents, businesses and organizations interested in helping may contribute through Britepaths' secure, online-donation page at: <https://britepaths.org/>

Drop-off Sites

The donation drop-off sites in Fairfax include:
24 Hour Fitness, 12300 Price Club Plaza;
Fairfax Towing & Quality Auto Body, 3176 Draper Drive;
Freedom Bank, 10555 Main St., 1st Floor;
Gathering Grounds coffee shop, 10637 Braddock Road;
JCC Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike;
STEM exCEL, 4010 University Drive, No. 104;
Sun & Moon Yoga, 9998 Main St.
Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Hwy.;
Sugar Mama's Ice Cream, 11208 Lee Hwy.;
Woody's Ice Cream, 10435 North St.

or mail a check to Britepaths, 4080 Chain Bridge Road, 2nd Floor, Fairfax, VA 22030. Write "BTS" in the memo line.

Donations of new backpacks and scientific calculators are also welcome. They may be brought to Britepaths' offices, now through Aug. 3, Mondays through Fridays, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Additional local drop-off sites are listed in a box and on Britepaths' website. Backpacks may also be ordered and shipped directly to Britepaths via "wish lists" on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [DollarDays.com](https://www.dollardays.com). For more information on donating or sponsoring the program, contact Joanne Walton at 703-273-8829 or jwalton@britepaths.org, or visit <https://britepaths.org/>.

"It is incredible to think that 54,000 students in the Fairfax County Public Schools system are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals," said Whetzel. "Their parents are struggling to put food on the table, and the prospect of finding funds to put toward school supplies is stressful for

them. We hope the community will respond generously to ensure that children whose families are in crisis are able to return to school this fall with all the tools they need to succeed in the new, school year."

Britepaths is collaborating in this effort with Fairfax County's Collect for Kids partnership, which includes FCPS, the Fairfax County Office of Public-Private Partnerships, Apple Federal Credit Union and various, local, nonprofit organizations and businesses, to serve as many students in need as possible by purchasing high-quality, school supplies at discounted prices.

The partnership, along with an agreement with Herndon-based Campus Survival Kits, allows Britepaths to provide all the supplies a student needs for approximately \$15 per student (and often \$10 or less for elementary students). Otherwise, it can often cost \$40 or more per child to purchase all the necessary supplies from retail stores.

Britepaths provides assistance and a way forward for struggling individuals and families throughout the county. It relies on funding and volunteer support from businesses, individuals, community organizations and faith communities to provide services that stabilize families via supplemental food and financial assistance; build resilience through Financial Education, Project BRIDGE and the Naomi Project; and offer seasonal support through Back-to-School and Holiday Assistance programs. More information is on Britepaths' Website.