



Respected Members of the Oregon Legislature,

Today, I am writing in support of recognizing Dr. Ralph Helzerman. Dr. Helzerman was a pillar of the Hillsboro community, and not just because of his height. He was a caring, well-informed, generous man who would give the shirt off his back to anyone in need.

I first met Ralph more than 25 years ago. He and his wife Marilyn had been attending the Hillsboro Schools Foundation auction and donating to the organization's Phone-a-thon. Ralph was such a giving person that no matter your need, he would try to support you. They were so generous that it's hard to find an area they didn't touch. They were repeat donors to HSF, The Oregon Chorale, Bag & Baggage Productions, Broadway Rose, the Oregon Cultural Trust, the Hillsboro Hops Foundation, and countless other community organizations. When you were around Ralph, you felt inspired to be a giver, just like him.

Ralph also hosted Hillsboro Hops players when they needed homes during the season. In exchange for a car wash or two of Marilyn's car, players were welcome to eat and live in their home. The bedrooms still had touches of 'girl décor' from Ralph's four daughters, but a free room with them was well worth it. There was one player, an outfielder who just wasn't connecting with the ball. He was from the Dominican Republic and wouldn't have asked for help. Ralph, sitting in his season ticket space in section nine, wondered if it was an eyesight issue. He reached out to the coach, met with the player, and fixed the problem! While we often joke that the umpires need their eyes checked, Ralph actually helped this young man's career!

It's hard to imagine a community without Ralph Helzerman. His ability to absorb personal details and his genuine curiosity made him a great conversationalist. He researched everything. He made you feel like the most important person in the room when speaking. Though Oregon was 'just' his adopted home state, he knew more about its topography, history, communities, and opportunities than most lifelong Oregonians. He was a walking Oregon Blue Book. He truly embodied Oregon, my Oregon.

Dr. Helzerman's legacy will live on through his philanthropy, but the real impact of his decades in Oregon will be felt by those whose lives he touched.

Thank you,

Aron Carleson

She/Her

Executive Director

Hillsboro Schools Foundation