

## Parcher Honored For Doing What He 'Loves'

Recognition of 63 years of public service was bestowed upon Donald Parcher of Rainier by Columbia County Commissioners last week when they voted to add Parcher's name to Hudson Park. Announcement of the action to rename the park Hudson-Parcher Park, was made to Parcher by Commissioner A.J. Ahlborn.

It was a small tribute to pay a man for the dedication he has given to the public for more than six decades, a length of service few can match.

But it was a fitting honor that Don Parcher's name be remembered in Hudson Park, a place he has spent so many years beautifying for the public's enjoyment.

The County Board of Commissioners last week honored Parcher, 83, by re-naming Hudson Park, the county owned park near Rainier, the Hudson-Parcher park.

When County Commissioner and Parks Director A.J. Ahlborn told Parcher of the honor Thursday afternoon, he was his characteristic self. "It's okay, but I've objected you taking the name Hudson off the park," he said.

Parcher, born and raised in Columbia County, is of the old-school. They don't seem to make people like him anymore.

Consider this:

Parcher began working for the county in 1910 when he was 15. "I ran a wheelbarrow down to the crusher, near here. That was the first job I had with the county," he recalls. He worked for the county roads department at that time and moved up to the position of crew foreman when the now designated Hudson-Parcher Park was first being constructed.

In 1915 after building his own home overlooking the park, he married his wife, Jeannette who is now deceased. But he still lives in that house he built on the hill.

The park was created on land that had been foreclosed on because of back taxes and the county decided the land should be used for a public park. Later it was named Hudson Park for a well known farming-ranching family in the area.

Even as a foreman, Parcher carried his own share of the load working with his crew to make the 17-acre park one of the most attractive in the state. From road crew foreman, Parcher was appointed to the county court, forerunner of county commissioners. He served on the court 9 years, being elected to two terms. Following his retirement from county service in 1960 at the age of 64, he went to work as caretaker of Hudson Park. "This park has become my life," he says.

Stories abound among his fellow workers at the park on how

Parcher, who lives on retirement benefits and a small wage he receives as caretaker, works from early morning to late night fixing up the park, using his own equipment. He spends his own money and also donates his own time to the park, receiving no compensation, for many of the long hours he put into the job.

He takes great pride in the fact that during his 19 years here "he had planted over 100 trees in the park with his hands."

Ahlborn told Parcher the tribute the Commissioners made to him was their way of saying "we appreciate what you've done." Afterwards Parcher, still faster than some men half his age, said he wasn't much for publicity. "I let my work do my publicity for me."

A plaque noting Parcher's service to the county will be erected at the part and Ahlborn hopes to have his name submitted to the state for statewide recognition of his dedication to the county.

For his part, Parcher, who celebrated his 84th birthday on April 24, says he hopes to be caring for the park he loves for at least another 19 years!