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For the Good of the City: Honoring Frank and Margaret Baldwin

By Laurie Snyder



'See what love can do" was the message of the first sermon delivered at the Orinda Community Church in 1998 by Rev. Frank Baldwin, who will retire at the end of this month.

Photos Ohlen Alexander

rinda City Council meetings are often dry, occasionally heated, and when at their best, bring citizens together to honor their neighbors for contributions made for the good of the City. On May 15, that is precisely what happened as Reverend Frank Baldwin was recognized for his

efforts to make Orinda kinder and its

discourse more civil.

Baldwin, a Berkeley native who graduated from the Yale Divinity School, is retiring at the end of this month from his appointment to the Orinda Historic Landmark Committee and as pastor at the Orinda Community Church (OCC) where he has served since 1998.

His wife, Margaret, is also retiring from Head-Royce School where she has taught French language and culture since 2000. Sweethearts since Berkeley High, the Baldwins have been a strong voice for those least able to advocate for themselves.

"Kindness," said Leslie Darwin O'Brien, OCC's Director of Community Life, is the first word which comes to mind when she thinks of Frank Baldwin. "He always takes the time to find out what is really going on in someone's life... in someone's heart."

"I think of Frank as a very caring person," said Council Member Victoria Smith. "He has done a lot to make the church a focal point - even for people who don't necessarily have a religious affiliation."

Both Smith and her colleague,

Vice Mayor Amy Worth, mentioned Baldwin's work with affordable senior housing programs as an example of the good he has done, noting that while Council members focused on program quality and cost in their negotiations with Eden Housing, Baldwin's eyes were trained on the services that would be offered to keep

seniors in their homes as long as possible before needing to transition to nursing homes. "He'd push at every juncture," and those services, said Smith, are "what will make the project a wonderful place to live and not just a beautiful building to look at."

Observing that OCC "is broader than its walls," Worth also spoke of the leadership by Baldwin and his congregants with regard to the Winter Nights homeless shelter. When City officials realized they would not have enough space to accommodate the many Orindans who wanted to make their voices heard in debates over the contentious issue, OCC offered the use of its Sanctuary. ... continued on page A8



Rev. Frank Baldwin, pastor of the Orinda Community Church who is retiring at the end of May from both the Church and his appointment to the Orinda Historic Landmark Committee, is honored by the Orinda City Council for his contributions to the city, from left: Baldwin, Mayor Steve Glazer, and Council Members Dean Orr, Victoria Smith, and Sue Severson.



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