

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**

Catherine Filippini  
[cfilippiniHW@gmail.com](mailto:cfilippiniHW@gmail.com)  
425-761-5717

**State Honors Exceptional People  
Positively Impacting Affordable Housing Across the Region**

*Eight individuals honored for their exceptional work and commitment*

**Tacoma, Wash.** — On Tuesday, October 16, the Washington State Housing Finance Commission recognized exceptional individuals positively impacting affordable housing across Washington state during its *Friend of Housing* award luncheon at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center. The awards ceremony took place during *Housing Washington 2012*.

*Friend of Housing* awards are presented to those individuals or organizations who have been instrumental in showcasing leadership and making exceptional contributions to creating or support affordable housing; implementing housing-related programs; creating innovative financing mechanisms for housing; supporting homebuyer education or technical training efforts within the housing community; helping to solve housing problems; and/or drafting legislation or public policy that addresses the state's housing needs.

"As the economy began to slide, the realization that the future might not be as expected meant adjustments would need to be made; we needed to see our future differently," said Karen Miller, Chair of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. "This year's awardees, which represent a broad spectrum of individuals working to advance affordable housing, have entered into their work with their eyes wide open, knowing that the future is the present moments, contacts, deeds and ideas on which we build our successes."

The six individuals presented with a 2012 *Friend of Housing Award* include:

- Tom Tierney of Seattle, retired Executive Director of the Seattle Housing Authority
- Bob Peeler of Spokane, Senior Family Development Specialist at Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners
- John Williamson of Port Angeles, Executive Director of the Lower Elwha Housing Authority
- Cindy Erickson of Seattle, retired Asset Manager for the City of Seattle Office of Housing
- Harry Burlingame of Burien, Boeing retiree and long-time volunteer for the Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity
- Rick Friedhoff of Seattle, Executive Director of the Compass Housing Alliance

The Commission also honored two individuals with the 2012 **Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Award**, recognizing and celebrating the sustained work of individuals for their exceptional contribution, inspirational vision, and unwavering commitment to affordable housing in Washington. The award is named after Margaret Sevy, a long-time advocate for affordable housing, who was committed to strengthening communities and the quality of life for the people in need of affordable housing. This year's honorees include:

- Bud Alkire of Everett, Executive Director of the Everett Housing Authority
- Bill Block of Seattle, retired Program Director for the Committee to End Homelessness

The Commission annually solicits *Friend of Housing* nominations from around the state. This year, the agency received more than twenty applications from people working in the public, private and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry.

### **About The Washington State Housing Finance Commission**

The Washington State Housing Finance Commission is a publicly accountable, self-supporting agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for Washington state residents. [www.wshfc.org](http://www.wshfc.org).

### **About *Housing Washington***

Strongly supported by financial institutions to nonprofit organizations, the *Housing Washington* conference is an annual collaboration of the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Washington State Department of Commerce and the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. [www.wshfc.org/conf](http://www.wshfc.org/conf).

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**Media Note:** Photo caption and individual winner descriptions are provided below.

### **Photo Caption:**

2012 *Friend of Housing* recipients from left to right: Bud Alkire (Margaret M. Sevy Award), Bob Peeler, Cindy Erickson, Rick Friedhoff, Bill Block (Margaret M. Sevy Award), and Tom Tierney. John Williamson and Harry Burlingame, not pictured, were also honored with awards during the luncheon ceremony.

### **2012 Friend of Housing Award Recipient Details:**

#### **About Tom Tierney**

Tom Tierney recently retired as Executive Director of the Seattle Housing Authority where he spent a lifetime dedicated to service. In his role, Tom led the way in many innovative responses for housing creation, financing, rehabilitation, and services. Under his leadership, the Authority earned a national reputation for its innovation and diligence in housing education and communication, and was one of the first housing authorities in the country to leverage annual capital funding allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, contributing to major infrastructure and building system repairs for low-income high-rise buildings. Tom has been ardently committed to ensuring the creation of housing for low-income residents and was instrumental in cultivating coalitions to provide critical housing support for seniors, households with very low incomes, homeless youth, and people living with AIDS. His career has exemplified an ethic of services and his priority has always been to serve those less fortunate and in need.

#### **About Bob Peeler**

Bob Peeler is known as the voice of the homeless. For more than twenty five years, he has been an advocate and supporter of the fight to end homelessness. As the Senior Family Development Specialist for Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners, he advised the state of Washington in the creation of the Transitional Housing Operating and Rent Program, which has assisted thousands of homeless households in obtaining and maintaining housing throughout the state. Bob has also been active with the Washington State Homeless Coalition for more than twenty years, researching and advising on the issues of homelessness and responding to homeless issues. He has been cited as one of the "best" homeless advocates and crisis case manager in the Spokane region, and one of the most articulate supporters for the homeless in Washington state. Bob is an innovative, creative leader with a strong conviction for ensuring everyone in the region has a decent, affordable place to live.

#### **About John Williamson**

As the Executive Director of the Lower Elwha Housing Authority, John Williamson is a well-respected leader, committed to improving the lives of American Indians through affordable housing. Countless families and children have benefitted from his work. During his career he has served on the board of the Northwest Indian Housing Association, held the position of Vice Chairman for the National American

Indian Housing Council, and participated in the White House Forum on Tribal Housing. Intently aware of the challenges that tribal communities face, he was instrumental in facilitating the successful development of the Eagle Bluff subdivision, providing 45 tribal families with a place to call home. John is well-known within the Northwest region for his advocacy to solve housing problems and for providing continued support to tribes. His presence, knowledge, and passion extend nationwide, encouraging progress and greater self-sufficiency among tribal members.

### **About Cindy Erickson**

Recently retired from her position as Asset Manager for the City of Seattle's Office of Housing, Cindy Erickson carries a visionary approach to affordable housing challenges. She is a "friend" in the truest sense of the word to the industry, and her affection and bond to the neediest in Seattle and to Washington's communities is unflinching. Her innovative solutions have been key to solving complex issues and her strengths lie in collaboration, common sense solutions, and persistent and consistent efforts with colleagues and stakeholders. From her work to preserve housing and asset management, to the many partnerships she has created and inspired, to the number of boards where she volunteered her time, Cindy's more than 25 years of work in the affordable housing has significantly and positively contributed to providing and ensuring the highest quality affordable housing for those who need it most.

### **About Harry Burlingame**

Quality and service are two words that define Harry Burlingame. After retiring from Boeing, Harry literally plunged into active volunteering with the Tacoma/Pierce County Habitat for Humanity, serving as the agency's plumbing and heating expert. In his more than 20 years of service to the organization, he has helped to build 185 homes and house 280 adults and 511 children. In his role as the lead builder and installer of radiant floor heating systems and tankless water heaters, he delivers significant energy efficiency and utility savings to those to live in their Habitat for Humanity homes. Harry volunteers more than 40 hours a week to help others achieve the dream of homeownership and has made his retirement a benefit to many in Washington state.

### **About Rick Friedhoff**

In his sixteen years as the Executive Director of Compass Housing Alliance, Rick Friedhoff has grown the small social service agency for homeless men into a large organization serving thousands of individuals and families. His vision enabled organizational growth to accommodate service to a broad spectrum of individuals and families struggling with homelessness and poverty, and their offerings now span from emergency services to permanent affordable housing. As he retires this month from his position, Rick's leadership in the community is evident. With a background in real estate law, his work with government funders, tax credit investors, and congregations has allowed for the assemblage of many creative and complex development projects including the renovation of the 100 year-old earthquake damaged 23-unit Compass Center in Pioneer Square, creation of the 58-unit Compass Veterans Center in Renton,

establishment of the Compass Cascade Women's Center in Seattle, and formation of the 80-unit Nyer Urness House in Ballard for chronically homeless adults (slated for opening in 2013). Rick's philosophy that safe, well-constructed housing is key, has helped move people from homelessness to healthy living situations. He is dedicated to ensuring people are treated with respect, honored and assisted in achieving their efforts to live a satisfying and productive life.

**About Bud Alkire** (*Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Awardee*)

After 31 years with the Everett Housing Authority and a career spanning 40 years, Executive Director Bud Alkire will be noted not only for his many tangible accomplishments, but also for his high ethical standards, fairness, respect for diversity, openness, and collaboration. Over the course of his tenure, he has doubled and diversified the Authority's housing portfolio and broadened its service base. His influence and breadth of success in providing for the housing needs within the city of Everett and Snohomish County has been significant. He has consistently demonstrated a commitment to the people he serves within the community including recognizing, identifying and addressing the barriers residents face in achieving independent economic stability. Thanks to his leadership, the Authority's successful Service Coordination model, which was envisioned and launched by Bud, was adopted by HUD and extended to their properties across the nation. He has been instrumental in contributing to the development of Everett's future, carrying with him a sense of humor, fairness, compassion, and humility to all his accomplishments.

**About Bill Block** (*Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Awardee*)

Throughout his personal and professional life, Bill Block sought to open doors to affordable housing and improve the treatment, employment, and availability of economic opportunities to people in need. As the former Program Director for the Committee to End Homelessness and a dedicated advocate to the *Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness*, his strategic eye for planning coupled with his vision and persuasion has contributed to positive results amidst the economic downturn. Through Bill's efforts, the supply of housing units for the homeless has tripled, government support from across the county and several jurisdictions has grown, and state legislation has been enacted supporting homelessness solutions. A long-time advocate for equity and social justice, Bill previously served as president of AIDS Housing of Washington and chair of the Seattle Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. Over the years he has also volunteered his time as a board member for a number of nonprofit agencies. As a member of the Leadership Council for the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Bill provided crucial input into the discussions and decisions on best and promising practices in address homelessness in the early days of state and national ten-year plans. For Bill, his dreams have been realized in his efforts of fulfilling the dreams for others – seniors, those challenged by the economy or education, persons living with AIDS, and the homeless – all living a better life thanks to the efforts of Bill Block.