



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – MARCH 2024

Dear Members of Westlake Lake Community,

I am pleased to share some insights from our recent special presentation to the WLMA Board by **Mr. Frans Bigelow**. Mr. Bigelow was the first Lake Operations Manager for WLMA back in the early 1970s when the maintenance and management of the lake was handed over to WLMA by the developer, D.K. Ludwig and his development company American-Hawaiian Land Co. (a subsidiary of American-Hawaiian Steamship Lines). After some years as the Lake Operations Manager, Mr. Bigelow moved on to be a developer of commercial and master planned communities, including Lake Sherwood Country Club.

Note: By the way, Westlake resident **John Notter** was the President of American-Hawaiian Land Co. and a major driver of the development of the lake and community from its beginning.

Mr. Bigelow took us on a journey back to the beginnings of the lake and community, highlighting the pivotal moment in 1967 when the dam was completed at a cost of \$2 million, marking the inception of our extraordinary lake. He emphasized how, even back then, our lake was seen as a marvel and a model for developers worldwide. Mr. Bigelow emphasized how the lake is "one of a kind" and its success at its inception and today is remarkable, and such a development probably couldn't be done again today.

During his tenure, Mr. Bigelow faced challenges that resonate with us today – maintaining the lake's beauty, ecology, water levels, safety, and privacy, all while ensuring adequate funding to make this all happen. He mentioned the early days of stocking the lake with bass and other fish while managing the invasive carp that he was actively managing back then too. He mentioned the early days were filled with "trial and error," as everything about maintaining and managing a lake was new.

Mr. Bigelow's dedication to our lake extended beyond his operational role. While he was the lake operations manager (note this was when his age was early 20s), he co-authored a case study on our lake for the Urban Land Institute in 1977 (available on our WLMA website), and conducted roadshow presentations around the country to share our lake's unique development story.

While the lake challenges remain largely the same today, Mr. Bigelow highlighted that we now have the benefit of more scientific knowledge, greater experience, and improved access to water resources. He emphasized the importance of ensuring appropriate funding of costs in our efforts to maintain the beauty, ecology, and safety of our lake. This is WLMA's focus while balancing funding and costs in our efforts.

It is crucial to remember that everything WLMA does is in service of our lake – ***"All Roads Lead to the Lake!"***

As we continue to navigate the challenges of lake management, let us draw inspiration from Mr. Bigelow's dedication and commitment to preserving this remarkable asset for generations to come.

Chip Lightfoot
President, Westlake Lake Management Association