



December 13, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jason McGrew-King
Intergovernmental Relations and Communications Supervisor
763-559-6779
jason.mcgregor-king@threeriversparks.org

CLIFTON FRENCH SELECTED FOR RECREATION AND PARK HALL OF FAME

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a network of 60,000 park and recreation professionals and advocates, inducted Clifton E. French into the Robert W. Crawford Hall of Fame during the 2017 NRPA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

Mr. French was the first superintendent of the Hennepin County Park Reserve District (now Three Rivers Park District). Under his leadership, the Park District grew from 400 acres to 24,000; seven park reserves, numerous regional parks and the Rush Creek Regional Trail were acquired and developed. He championed natural resources conservation and wildlife habitat protection in the rapidly-growing Twin Cities metropolitan area, and was instrumental in the development of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Regional Park and Open Space System. Following his retirement, the Park District named Clifton E. French Regional Park in Plymouth in his honor.

He served as Park District superintendent for 22 years, from 1962-1984. Following his retirement, Mr. French worked as a consultant, as a lecturer in the School of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Minnesota, and as executive director of the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association. Prior to his work at the Park District, he was the first director of parks and recreation for the City of Edina. Mr. French died in 2006 at the age of 87.

"It's a great honor to my uncle's legacy that he was chosen for the Recreation and Park Hall of Fame," said Betsy Larson, Mr. French's niece, who serves on the board of directors of the Three Rivers Park District Foundation. "He made a positive impact on countless people through his work developing the Three Rivers Park District system, teaching at the University of Minnesota, and championing parks and recreation at MRPA, and I'm proud that he has been recognized for parks and recreation's highest honor."

Established in 1987, the Robert W. Crawford Hall of Fame recognizes individual pioneers and leaders who have made extraordinary and lasting contributions to the advancement of parks and recreation in the United States, as well as to the mission of NRPA. It is a posthumous honor that may be presented no earlier than five years following the death of inductees, in order to assure their contributions have had a long-term impact. More than 40 people have received the honor since 1987. For additional information about the Robert W. Crawford Hall of Fame, visit www.nrpa.org/halloffame/.

(more)

FAMILY PROGRAMS/2

About Three Rivers Park District

Three Rivers Park District is a nature-based park system that manages park reserves, regional parks, regional trails and special-use facilities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Three Rivers Park District's mission is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. The Park District owns and operates more than 27,000 acres and serves nearly 11 million visitors a year.

About the National Recreation and Park Association

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit www.nrpa.org. For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit www.parksandrecreation.org.