

## **THE BRIDGE NAMING**

By Ray Watson  
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First, I would like to begin by thanking Donald Bren whose idea it was to name the Bridge after me and who set this whole process in motion.

And, of course thanks to Mayor Krom of the city of Irvine, which owns this bridge, and now has allowed my name to be associated with it. But more importantly a city that has demonstrated over and over again its belief in the now 45-yr old mission to convert William Pereira's vision into the reality the city of Irvine has become.

And finally, thanks to UCI Chancellor Drake and all the Chancellors who have preceded him for building the incredible academic and research institution that any city would be proud to be connected to. Also I would like to recognize that the University is also now celebrating its' 40<sup>th</sup> birthday measured from its opening in 1965 although I must confess that the year I most celebrate is 1960 when the Company and University officially accepted Pereira's vision of the very town and gown we all are so proud of today. So if you don't mind my cake will have 45 candles on it.

### **The Scorecard, How Have We All Done?**

There are many ways to judge our success or failure.

In a society where people have the right to free travel and can live wherever they can afford to go, my measure of success is relatively simple.

Do people want to live here?

Do they keep coming?

Are they happy? Satisfied?

Significantly, I think, we have reached a place where people don't just move to Irvine, but they join it.

More than half of the new homes sold in Irvine are sold to Irvine residents who want to stay here whether they are moving up or down.

We see evidence of young people who left for college, and now are returning to marry and raise their families here.

A recent internal survey done by our company asks residents “if they had it to do all over again, would they move to Irvine?” A remarkable 82% said yes. And more than 50% said that they would choose to live in Irvine even if they had all the money needed to live anywhere in the world.

These are the most important validations of what we have done: That in a market economy, people choose to live here because this city works. It is safe, has great schools, a fabulous university that contributes to their quality of life in many ways, abundant jobs; a slew of parks, open spaces, and trails; it’s clean, beautifully landscaped; and people can get around town relatively easily.

What more satisfaction can an architect and planner have in judging one’s life’s work with wonderful people who think big, act big, take risks, embrace challenges, stick to a plan, and live to see it exceed expectations.

**Let me close by saying how pleased and proud I am for receiving this particular honor. To me The Bridge:** Symbolizes William Pereira’s 1960 founding vision of building a 20<sup>th</sup> century town and gown on the Irvine Ranch and it’s concrete existence serves to constantly remind both of the importance of one to the other.

As for my reaction to it being named after me my first thought was remembering what Jack Peltason told me after the University named a major campus street after him. Jack said, nothing in his incredibly successful career had elevated his stature with his grandchildren more than that honor.

As for me, in truth, like Jack I am honored and flattered to have anything named after me, especially when done in front of Elsa, my best friend and wife of 51-years and our four adult kids and their spouses.

And also perhaps now, hopefully with six of our ten grandchildren here they may come to realize that I have done something more than make it possible for them to get free passes to Disneyland.