

# IRVINE'S ROAD TO CITY HOOD

## By Ray Watson

The idea of The Irvine Company building a new town around a new University of California campus on the famous Irvine Ranch was first suggested by planner/architect William Pereira in an October 1959 study jointly authorized by Company and University. Six years later, in the spring of 1965, the nascent town named Irvine became home to its' first residents and the newly opened campus of the University of California system named Irvine welcomed its first freshman class. On December 21, 1971, in what was described as one of heaviest turnouts in Orange County incorporation election history, the residents of Irvine overwhelmingly approved becoming Orange County's 26<sup>th</sup> incorporated city. It is the twelve-year journey from idea to incorporation that I chronicle here.

A trip that saw the Company fight off a 1962 attempt by the City of Santa Ana to grab off a strategic portion of Company land designated for the future city. Followed in 1970 by the successful grab of a portion of the new town's industrial lands by the adjacent city of Newport Beach. And while the Company was unsuccessfully holding off Newport Beach's intrusion into lands the Company was reserving for the future new town the County's planning commission was refusing to set a public hearing for the Company's proposed central sector master plan. And finally in the wake of Newport Beach's annexation and the County's refusal to set hearings for the Company's central sector master plan both Company and Irvine citizens began the process of incorporation, a process that soon was opposed by an important Regent of the University and the County's largest and oldest city, Santa Ana.

### THE CASE FOR CITYHOOD CAME EARLY

Imbedded in Pereira's 1959-University/Town study was the recommendation that the future town ultimately become self-governing by incorporating itself. In that report Pereira addressed the issue of future city-hood by putting forth three alternatives: (1) Remaining unincorporated under the jurisdiction of the County of Orange, (2) Annexing to an adjacent existing city, (3) Establishing its' independence as a legal city through the process of incorporation.

Having identified the three choices Pereira made the case for the incorporation option by citing the disadvantages of the other two. His argument against them was they would perpetually leave the new nascent community vulnerable to be: ***“totally or in part annexed by an adjoining city before having an opportunity to decide its (own) ultimate status.”*** An option he considered undesirable because: ***“The natural desires, needs, goals and aspirations of the surrounding cities do not, in our opinion, appear to be the same as those of the proposed university town. Older, well-established interests within these existing cities might make progress and identity slow and difficult in the newer, annexed portion of the city.”*** And to demonstrate local support for the new city Pereira included copies of agreements he had secured from the cities surrounding the Ranch declaring their support and their pledge **not** to annex any of the Company's lands within the 10,000-acres identified for the new city.

Addressing the crucial issue of annexation or incorporation, Pereira asked a question that might have been posed by our nation's founding fathers: ***“By what means can the new community secure the governmental and legislative representation, the required services and the sense of identity necessary to establish and perpetuate its ideals?”*** It is the sort of question that goes to the heart of what it means to live not just in a community, but also in a democratic society.

But Pereira's understanding of the importance of self-governance in the role of community building didn't stop with his advocacy of cityhood. He also understood the critical role local schools played in the family's identification of community. And to demonstrate that he also secured a resolution from the Orange County Committee on School District Organization indicating, as they prepared their mandated countywide master plan for future school district unifications, they would attempt to hold future school district boundaries coterminus with those of the proposed new city.

In retrospect, the fact Pereira's initial reports addressed the crucial roles both cityhood and school boundaries and not urban design is surprising. Surprising, only because his career had been dominated by the designs of individual buildings yet his initial reports spent little time establishing architectural and urban design principles. Debates over community design issues or what some now refer to, as “new urbanisms” would come later. Instead, he demonstrated a unique understanding of the social and political issues that create a sense of community and are equally crucial in our efforts to also create a “sense of place.”

What little experience Pereira had in planning a city The Irvine Company had even less in building one. What it did have, however, was a 90-year history of managing the 100,000-acre ranch located within a county that by 1960 had become the fastest growing in the nation and bordered by six cities each of which included portions of the ranch as part of their future growth. As a result, The Irvine Company had established strong working relationships with each of them, annexing land parcels to them when it would periodically peel off edges of the ranch for sale or lease.

By 1960, however, what the Company managers and owners did know was that its' years of resisting opening up the center of the ranch to real estate development was fast coming to an end. What the Company didn't have was a clear vision of what form the future city would take and what role the Company would play in that transformation.

What Pereira's city building vision did for the Company's owners and managers was as grand and magnificent as was the ranch itself. The days of peeling off parcels of land around its edges in response to some real estate developers offer or one of the surrounding city's desires to grow had become replaced by a vision that fit the scale and possibilities of the magnificent Irvine ranch itself. Pereira's city building vision required the Company to become proactive rather than reactive in the ranch's transformation from its agricultural past to its urban future. A role the company needed to play if Pereira's vision had any change of becoming a reality. A role no one but the owners of the ranch could play. And finally, a role that identified the Company's future. The Irvine Company would soon begin to describe that role as Master Community Builder.

## PLANNING IRVINE BEGINS

In September of 1960, other than small pieces of the ranch's edge, the entire ranch was without an approved master plan and was zoned only for agriculture. What the Company had was William Pereira's two phased University Campus and Community Report, the last phase of which had been completed less than six months earlier. But Pereira's University City plan had no official standing having never been filed with the County Planning Commission. And in many respects Pereira's reports could at best be characterized more as visions than plans.

He wrote that the size of the ranch offered the unique ***“opportunity of creating an independent and self-sufficient city that would meet all the needs of the University.”*** Pereira suggested its' physical size as 10,000-acres with a population of 100,000 residents. A size that Pereira most likely suggested as the minimum to become the University City he envisioned. A size, incidentally, that was the exact size both as to area and population as that advocated by the famous British planner Sir Ebenezer Howard for their model satellite new towns.

The early part of the '60's was dedicated to planning, building and growing both the nascent community and campus. As the community grew, new families settled in, raised their families and gave little of their precious time to city governance or incorporation. At the Company we, however, began the careful process of transforming Pereira's early visions into realities. The University began construction in 1963 and shortly thereafter the Company began development of its first residential village, University Park, both of which were to open by fall of 1965. During this period the Company prepared and in early 1964 secured county approval of a General Master Plan for the 33,000-acre southern third of the ranch including the 10,000-acres designated for the future university city.

### Santa Ana's Surprise

In the spring of 1962, while working with the County's planning department in preparation to submitting our southern sector general plan, unbeknown to us, the City of Santa Ana was preparing plans that if enacted would have blocked any possibility of expanding the 10,000-acre proposed University city into the central valley of the Ranch. Soon we would learn that Pereira's concerns about potential conflicts between the goals of older existing cities and the new emerging one would prove to have been prophetic when in early June Santa Ana, without public notice, filed what they called the Newport-Dyer annexation. Santa Ana had secretly reached an accommodation with the retirement community developer Ross Cortese who was seeking to develop property on the opposite side of the Ranch from the city. To satisfy a requirement that land annexed to an existing city must be contiguous Santa Ana had included a 300-foot wide and 8-1/2-mile strip of Irvine land connecting Santa Ana and Cortese's development. Not only did the city's filing surprise the Company it came barely two years after the City had signed a pledge not to annex any of the Company's land that was within the 10,000-acres designated for the university community and yet the strip ran across the eastern edge of the future community and if approved would have prevented the new university community from ever expanding.

Although Santa Ana's filing caught everyone by surprise, many of the surrounding cities took it as a joke because if approved it would result in creating a city shaped like a "dumbbell" with the existing city on one end of the strip and a new retirement city nearly nine miles apart connected on the opposite end. But we soon learned that for Santa Ana this proposal was no joke.

Over the next three months nothing dominated more of my time than this issue. I sought meetings with Santa Ana's City Manager and/or members of the city council but no one wanted to meet with us. I traveled the local service club circuit attempting to garner support for our position while the city manager, Carl Thornton, essentially stonewalled us and seemed content to merely repeating his position that the annexation **"is perfectly legal and he doesn't foresee anything that could prevent it."**

Our concern was that under the existing annexation regulations other than protesting there appeared to be little we could do to prevent it. Although there was a countywide agency known as the Local Annexation Formation Committee (LAFCO) charged with the responsibility of opining on all annexation requests their opinions were by law advisory only. And with the city unwilling to even meet with us we prepared ourselves for the first public hearing set by the Santa Ana's planning commission for July 22, 1962.

At the time my family and I lived in Santa Ana just ½-block from the city's planning director, Jim Teffer. So on weekends I would wonder over to his house and in his back yard with benefit of a beer in hand attempt to engage Jim in a debate over the planning merits of the proposed annexation. However, the reality was Jim worked for the City Manager and this annexation was his prize goal and the city's planning directors job was to support the City Manager's desires.

In retrospect, the contrast between the Company and Santa Ana's position was understandable. Santa Ana was the oldest and largest city in the county. It was the County Seat housing both city and county government offices. For years the city fathers had resisted expanding its borders with the result that by 1962 it found itself boxed in by the emergence of new cities on all its boundaries with exception of the Irvine Ranch. Now with the real prospect that their only remaining boarder may soon be closed with the emergence of a new and potentially larger city, Santa Ana's city fathers suddenly reversed their historic policy of resisting expansion and sent a "strip" across the ranch effectively blocking any expansion of the nascent new university community and opening up the central part of the Ranch for Santa Ana's expansion.

Santa Ana's city manager, Carl Thornton, finally acknowledged their intensions during a joint Company/City presentation to the Red Hill Breakfast Club. Thornton acknowledged that the "strip" blocks the future university from expanding but then argued that in competition with Los Angeles, Orange County **"needs a major city and he proposes it be Santa Ana"** and not the new town. It was at that breakfast that we first heard of their ambitions for expansion. I followed Thornton with the argument that the Company had not yet concluded what city we preferred to include the central section of the ranch in, whether it be Santa Ana, the proposed University town or another new town. The truth is that we hadn't begun planning the Company's central valley. My protestations were made on deaf ears. The city manager had made a deal with the developer and they had anticipated our objection. So public debates on its merits was of no interest to him. He too had a vision for his city and he was pursuing it.

Santa Ana's Planning Commission held its' first open public hearing on the annexation on the evening of July 22<sup>nd</sup>. The room was packed and the hearing lasted four hours. Those opposed, primarily the Company and University, attempted to point out the ridiculousness of the proposal by hanging on the wall a map of the existing city attached to what by now was referred to as the "**strip**" attached to the proposed community nearly away. We pointed out that the city had presented no plans to illustrate what they envisioned inside the strip and that the Leisure World it was attached to was to be a closed guard-gated community open only to the elderly.

Before long it became obvious that the Planning Commissioner's had little interest in hearing about planning. They were committed to the annexation and in their judgment held all the cards necessary to make it happen. A summary of the four hours can best be described by listing the "buss-words" from the pro and anti speakers. Those opposed spoke of the annexation as: "**Absurd, Tragic, Hideous, Ugly, Havoc and Incredible.**" Those in favor: "**Blackjacked, Blocked, Opportunity to Grow and Last Chance.**" The vote "**for**" was unanimous with the next and last stop to be before the City Council.

Meetings before the city council were also crowded and boisterous but in the end mostly a repetition of the Planning Commission's meeting. The last and final meeting was held before the City Council in mid-September to a standing room only crowd. In-between meetings we had explored every legal issue we could find. We met with officials of both the University and the State seeking their input. Finally we struck pay dirt. A company civil engineer had reviewed the entire length of the "strip" and discovered that within it there was a 20-acre parcel that the company had previously sold to the State for an interchange on the future San Diego Freeway.

The parcel had not been shown on the maps provided by the city and its location within the "strip" became pivotal. Why, because annexation-law requires approval of the property owners of all public **and** private lands within the proposed annexation. Because the City assumed we owned all the land within the "strip" they had carefully crafted the size of the strip to assure that the cumulative assessed value of the Company's land was less than that of Ross Cortese's land thus allowing his yes votes to exceed our no votes. However the law stated that if a public agency owning land within a proposed annexation disapproves of its' inclusion and the agency files an objection the entire annexation becomes void. Historically, the State Division of Freeways had never objected to annexations since it made little difference to them what city its' freeways ran through. But once we discovered the State had the right to protest we, together with the University, prevailed upon them to oppose the annexation.

At the final public meeting a representative of the State filed a letter of protest. It came as a shock to the city. The State's protest was a dart through the heart of the City's expansion ambitions. The only choice the city had was to re-map the strip to avoid any public lands. Why they didn't was never revealed to us. I suspect though that the furor over the summer is something neither the City Council nor Ross Cortese wanted to repeat.

However, from a public policy point of view some good came out of the highly publicized battle. Although LAFCO had been created by the State's Legislature as an independent regional agency to review and opine on all annexations its' failure to have the legal "teeth" to enforce its' opinions rendered it impotent. Within months, State

Senator John Knox introduced and the State Senate quickly passed legislation “requiring” LAFCO’s approval of all city annexations or incorporations. A change that probably influenced Santa Ana’s decision not to re-file their “strip” annexation. And, before long, LAFCO’s new power was to play a role in the future filing to incorporate the fast growing community named Irvine.

## WHEN AND HOW BIG A CITY

With the annexation battle behind us we concentrated on installing the required infrastructure for both the University and its’ first residential community, University Park. However, it wasn’t until 1965, three years after our annexation battle, that the first family moved into the new town that by then we had officially named Irvine and UCI welcomed its first freshman class. Both families and students made their respective decisions to buy into the Irvine dream solely on what they hoped community and campus would become. Contrast that article of faith with what a prospective homebuyer and student knows today before they make the same decision. Today their decision is reinforced by the knowledge that both the city of Irvine and UCI have worldwide reputations that place each in the upper stratosphere of places to live or learn.

But in 1965 we still were working within the 33,000-acre 1964 southern sector general plan approved by the County. However, with the opening of University Park we began expanding our planning into the central sector of the ranch requiring us to resolve the latent question of either another new town or expand Irvine.

We explored all the issues of planning, infrastructure, flood control and drainage, school district boundaries and governance. The central valley of the ranch geographically had the shape of a large saucer. The eastern slope of the San Joaquin hills and the western slope of the Lomas de Santiago hills both drained into the flat planes of the central ranch valley. By extending the city’s boundaries to the rims of the eastern and western hills we provide a strong visual edge while also containing the natural drainage from hills to flat lands within one city. Fortunately the case for one versus two cities was materially strengthened by the fact the existing elementary school district, Rancho San Joaquin, encompassed the entire central sector. A district that we were advocating become a kindergarten through high school unified district. Our conclusion was: One town. That meant Pereira’s 10,000-acre, 100,000-population town would be expanded five fold to a city of 50,000-acres.

While we were in the planning stage of expanding the boundaries of the future University City the three existing elementary school districts and the Tustin High School District were struggling to respond to the State’s mandate that all elementary districts become part of some unified K-thru twelve unified school district. Discussions had been held among the districts but our desire to have coterminus boundaries between the future city and one of the unified school districts became a concern. We hadn’t yet solidified support for the enlarged city boundaries. So I sought and received support for delaying the decision from the joint school committee that was studying the issue.

A summary of the committee’s agreement to delay their recommendation on this vital issue was reported in the April 4, 1964 L A Times. As the paper reported: ***“Consideration of unification of four Tustin area school districts must be delayed until southeast growth patterns and school districting for the university community are***

*determined.....the county committee also has accepted plans for the Irvine Co. to make an economic feasibility study on school districting for the university city.*

*Irvine Co. Planning manager Raymond Watson reported that such a study already has been started and should be forthcoming within 90 days. Watson said that the company's study, attempting to determine the future economic soundness of the university city, will include estimates for future costs of all urban services, not only schools.*

*In calling for the three affected school districts to make concurrent studies, Watson said, "Orange County's rapid growth is causing school districts to face severe problems in the future. These districts must know what the future brings for them." "Development and planning history have indicated that one of the great pressures on land use planning has been economic consideration. If a particular city or district finds itself with an inadequate tax base, there will be pressures within the district or city to reshift industrial lands to such a location as to create more adequate tax base."*

*Watson concluded by saying: "the Irvine Company wants to see a division of industrial areas so each of the districts can be economically healthy."*

It would be seven and one half years before Irvine incorporated and nearly eight years before Irvine Unified School District was formed but the promises made in 1964 were honored and as a result the city and school district called for each to share, for the most part, the same boundaries and as a consequence they each are the stronger because of it.

As we were preparing to file the Ranch's central sector master plan with the county and with that the proposed expansion of the future city's boundaries I sought support from the University. Therefore, before filing it I met with UCI's Chancellor, Dan Aldrich, seeking his support of the enlarged city. After our meeting Chancellor Aldrich said he had no objections but wanted to bring it before the University Regents. Prior to presenting the revised plan to the Regents Dr. Aldrich invited Regent Norton Simon to the campus and asked me to present the plan to him. Regent Simon had originally opposed the Irvine Ranch location for the campus and Aldrich was hoping to avoid it becoming an issue.

My meeting with Regent Simon did not go well. He paid little heed to any of my planning points. He asked no questions nor offered any specific objections. He ended the meeting, however, by inferring that the Company must have some ulterior self-interest motifs in proposing the changes and he was opposed to enlarging the city.

After Regent Simon left I told Chancellor Aldrich of my disappointment but that I heard nothing from Simon that dissuaded me from seeking approval of the central sector plan and in so doing we would make it clear of our advocacy for the enlarged city.

So on March 19, 1970, with encouragement of the County's planning staff we submitted our central sector General Plan to the Orange County Planning Department. Although what we were actually seeking was General Plan approval of the central sector of the Ranch as with our submittal in 1963 of the southern sector General Plan we made it clear that a major premise of the plan was the enlarged city. And that both the County and Company understood that ultimately that was a decision to be decided by the future residents.

Bill Mason, President of the Company, also included in a public statement about the submitted plan that *"the basic elements of the new city already have emerged and it*

**would be prudent for the 10,000 residents now living there to begin considering incorporation to protect their environment and tax base.”** Mason went on to say, **“It is crucial to the maintenance of the integrity of the newly completed master plan.”**

Mason’s statement about incorporation is the first time the Company or anyone within the future city had suggested the new residents begin thinking about incorporation.

A month later, on April 17<sup>th</sup> the Company filed a 4000-acre Planned Community (PC) zoning request in an area bounded on the east and west by the Santa Ana and San Diego freeways and on the north and south by the Tustin Air Base and Jeffery Road. The PC zoning had recently been developed by the County Planning Department and allows, “Flexible development standards based on new technology and urban design concepts.” It was the largest zoning request ever submitted by the Company. The Company stated it was being filed at this time so both the City General Plan and the zoning could be processed simultaneously.

However, by early summer the County Planning Commission had not set a date for the first public hearing on the new plan. During that time relations between our Company and newly elected county supervisors progressively had become strained. These were the anti-war years and years of new environmental sensitivity. Big was beginning to mean bad and, right or wrong, the Irvine Company and other large institutions were beginning to feel the brunt of that sentiment.

Riding this new wave were politicians, including those at the county level. Among them were new county supervisors Bob Battin, representing the Santa Ana area, and Ron Caspers, representing the south county area, both of whom took office in early 1970. They, along with supervisor Ralph Diedrich, representing north county, formed what was to become a new troika of power in county politics and the big Irvine Company became a perfect political target.

Whereas, in 1963 the Company’s filing of its 33,000-acre southern sector master plan was praised for its’ commitment to planning by 1970 the filing of our 32,000-acre central sector plan became a political target. And the way the supervisors dealt with it was to bury our two submittals deep within the bureaucratic maze of the county planning department.

At a meeting of the Planning Commission, held in early June of 1970, I was again hoping the Commission would set a date for the first public hearing on our submittals. Much to my disappointment no dates were set. No mention was made of our plans. At the conclusion of the meeting the commissioner representing Santa Ana invited me into his office. He opened the meeting by asking me, **“do you want to know how to have the commission begin the process of reviewing your submittal?”** He then informed me that what the Company needed for our plans to be reviewed was: **“to get the Santa Ana (now Orange County) Register off his supervisor’s back.”** For some time the Register had been editorially critical of the supervisors. I told the commissioner that was the paper’s agenda and we had no ability to influence it. That ended the discussion and I left not knowing when, if ever, the Commission would bring up our plans.

Upon returning to my office I shared with Bill Mason my conversation with the Commissioner. Together we reviewed our options and concluded that the former professional give and take between the county planning staff and ours had been replaced with a purely political process, an agenda that we weren’t willing to participate in. For some time we had been speculating when the new residents might be ready to seek their

own independence. Thus began an 18-month process that culminated in the December 21, 1971 incorporation election.

Up until now, there had been no spontaneous stirring within Irvine to make that move. Although incorporation as an idea was a decade old, the longest any resident had lived in the community was less than five years. Families were furnishing their new homes, sending their kids off to new schools and having any local conflicts resolved by their own community associations. While some may have been curious about the central sector general plan we had filed, the county's failure to call for public hearings completely muted any open discussion of its' impact on their community. Irvine's new residents were busy organizing their own lives into their new neighborhoods and saw no compelling reason to take on the issue of city-hood.

### **THE CAMPAIGN FOR CITYHOOD BEGINS**

Our first step was to introduce the subject to Irvine residents. Other than the vague promise growing out of Pereira's 1960 report and my periodic assertions that the company desired that Irvine become a self governing city, little had been done in preparing the new residents for city-hood. Now was the time. The question was how?

Fortunately, by 1970 the Company owned two powerful communication vehicles, The Irvine World News, a local monthly newspaper we launched in January of 1970, and the local TV cable company that served all Company developments. The cable company, per its' charter, periodically was required to produce informational programs about Irvine. The next scheduled live program was set for early June. At that meeting we invited leaders from seven different Irvine community associations to participate in a discussion devoted to the subject of cityhood for Irvine.

The program started with Company representatives briefing the audience on the current status of planning for Irvine and the difficulties we were having with the County Planning Commission.

We also advised them that Collins Radio, a company lessee of a 177-acre industrial site within the area designated for the future city of Irvine, had expressed a desire to change their zoning from industrial to a one allowing high-rise office, hotels and business. Of greater concern, however, was Collins stated intent to annex their site to the city of Newport Beach. And, as with Santa Ana's strip annexation attempt eight years earlier, Collins and their proposed developer had tentatively secured an endorsement from Newport Beach. The fact that Newport Beach in 1960 had signed a letter of non-annexation of property designated for the new city now ten years later was being ignored. As we explained to our audience and the association leaders we were concerned that this could be the beginning of annexation raids by all the surrounding cities and potentially the beginning of the end to Irvine as a separate city. The message we obviously were conveying was if the citizens of this young community ever wanted to become a separate city now is the time to decide.

At the conclusion of two hours of live broadcasting the moderator invited viewers to phone in questions and/or comments. One of the first calls came from Alan Snodgrass, president of the Turtle Rock Association. He urged the community immediately become involved by forming a mutual effort to protect the proposed new city's master plan and economic base. He ended his comments with: ***"I think we should get this thing off***

*dead-center.*” Snodgrass’s call was immediately followed by dozens of viewers calling and expressing their desire to begin the cityhood process.

### **IRVINE CITIZENS COMMITTEE (CCI) IS FORMED**

The seven community leaders in the studio concluded the telecast by voting unanimously to set up a steering committee to study incorporation. On June 24, 1970, less than three weeks following the telecast, they held their first formal meeting at which they adopted the name: Council of the Communities of Irvine (CCI.) John Burton, one of Irvine’s early residents and president of the Village Park Community Association, was elected committee chairman and Alan Snodgrass president. Burton proved to be the ideal leader. He was independent from the Company, articulate, a good organizer and committed to the task. At that meeting the original seven were joined by a broad mixture of homeowners, merchants and industries and soon thereafter UCI administration, faculty and student representative joined. The mood of the participants was a mixture of enthusiastic support for cityhood measured by a sense of urgency.

Over the next two months CCI internally debated, studied and then concluded now was the time to share with a broader audience the steps needed to be taken before officially filing for cityhood. So, on August 22, 1970 they held their first open public meeting. Approximately 100 people crowded into the Physical Science Room at UCI and listened to a representative of the Irvine Company discuss the differences between incorporation, annexation and status quo. The Company’s position was that if the citizens of Irvine wanted to take control of their own destiny status quo was not an option. The immediate job before them was to understand the economic, social and political consequences of both annexation and incorporation.

Following the Company’s presentation, members of the audience expressed opinions ranging from *“let’s not waste any time talking”* to *“How can we help?”* The impatience became contagious as first one and then another spoke up urging the council not wait until it has completed its study of the feasibility of incorporating and file immediately. Sensing the mood of the audience both John Burton and Alan Snodgrass told the audience that their research of the process indicated that it could take as long as 13 months of study before they would be ready to officially file.

The audience’s immediate concern was the threat of neighboring municipalities annexing additional portions of the Irvine Industrial Complex. *“We must act fast,”* one man said. *“I’ve lived in bedroom communities that had no tax base, and I know the kind of taxes they have to pay.”* Another man in the audience reminded the council that The Irvine Company had a master plan and *“if that’s not the homework of 10 years, I don’t know what homework is.”* Then another said, *“We need to have all the facts before we take action otherwise we could lose voter support. If we wait, the ballgame will be all over. If we act too fast, it may cause a negative reaction.”* The discussion ended with someone saying, *“We must stop talking about doing something and just get out and do it.”*

John Burton took the floor and reminded the audience that the Council is only a fact-finding organization and not only is without funds, but is also without any authority to make any decision regarding the future of Irvine. *“We will study the facts and present them to you, the people of Irvine. The decision then is all yours.”*

The immediate urgency that invaded the room most likely had been fueled by the fact that LAFCO had just met the week before and by a vote of 4-1 approved the request of Collins Radio to annex their 177-acres to Newport Beach. At the LAFCO meeting I had told the commission that 10-years and \$3 million had gone into the preparation of the plans for the City of Irvine and that the Collins site was within the original Pereira plans for the proposed city. And that in 1960 the city of Newport Beach had passed a resolution of none annexation of lands proposed for the new city as an inducement for locating the university campus on the Irvine Ranch.

I concluded my remarks by stating that representatives of the business community and the University had joined the Irvine Company in asking for a two-month delay while CCI completed their future city's study. Unfortunately, my pleas went on deaf ears because after 3-1/2 hours of presentations one of the commissioners immediately moved that the hearing be closed and moved to grant Newport Beach's petition to annex the property. That motion was approved on a 4 to 1 vote. By that vote it became clear that past commitments supporting Irvine's quest for cityhood no longer could be relied upon. It was now time for Irvine's residents to take the issue into their own hands.

### UC REGENT NORTON SIMON DEBATES CITYHOOD

Although we were still a year away from an election the pro-cityhood momentum was moving so swiftly I decided now was the time to bring the University administration into the loop. So sometime during the late summer of 1970 I contacted UCI Chancellor Aldrich seeking the University's official support for the proposed incorporation. He responded by putting the subject on the Regents November board agenda.

Not having heard from Regent Simon since my earlier meeting I wondered what his position would be. I was soon to find out. In early October I was informed by the LA Times that Regent Simon had called a press conference for October 5<sup>th</sup> on the subject of Irvine's proposed incorporation. The Times asked if we wanted to respond. We immediately made arrangements to respond following Simon's comments without knowing what he was about to say.

On Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> Simon began his remarks by stating he ***"believes he is raising questions which properly should be asked about the relationship between Irvine Company and the University."*** He then charged that the proposed five fold enlargement of Irvine from that originally proposed would result in ***"unjust enrichment"*** of the Company which he estimated at ***"\$450-million"*** and stated that at their next Regents meeting he would ask his fellow regents to ***"begin a suit for compensatory and punitive damages against the Irvine Company for proceeding with the development of the City of Irvine in a manner which violates the agreement with the university."*** He concluded by stating ***"the public will be shocked"*** when the ***"full story"*** is told at the Oct. 15th and 16th Regents' meeting. As the local press reported, Simon ***"said he has information which will impel the regents to file the suit to recover all or part of that amount"*** and called the matter ***"the largest cookie jar that can be recalled without going back to the Teapot Dome scandal"*** but refused to ***"divulge details of his accusation."***

Immediately following Simon's press conference I held one to respond. I told the press that my first reaction was to be overwhelmed by both the passion by which he made them and the fact that he choose a press conference to make the charges without first

making them directly to the Company. I then took the press through the process we had used in making our recommended changes and reminded them that ultimately it will be the citizens of Irvine, not The Irvine Company, that will decide on whether to incorporate or not and if so what size city.

In response to his \$450 million windfall charge I threw my hands up in the air and said I had no idea how he arrived at that conclusion. The land that the Company was now proposing to include in the future city would be developed whether it became part of Irvine or not. After months of study, as a planner, I had concluded that rather than annex it to an adjacent city or create another new town adjacent to the university community that for sound planning reasons it should be one community. Having concluded that, we approached the University, the County Planning Department and the residents within Irvine and informed them of that view. I concluded my remarks by saying that if Regent Simon disagrees with that conclusion he should make his objections directly with the citizens committee which is in the process of studying the matter. Regent Simon stood at the back of the room while I was addressing the press but when asked by them to respond, he declined.

### UNIVERSITY REGENTS DEBATE THE ISSUE

The October Regent's meeting came and went with no vote on Irvine's proposed incorporation after the Regents listened to the same charges Simon had made at his press conference. There followed, we were told, a lengthy debate on the merits of Irvine's proposed incorporation and size.

However, at the Regent's November meeting Irvine's prospective incorporation became the basis for further discussion and debate. UC assistant vice president Robert J. Evans reviewed events of recent months which compelled, he said, the Council of Communities of Irvine (CCI) to ***"act with haste"*** in seeking protection of the future city's industrial tax base. Evans said the ***"CCI"*** was ***"forced to act swiftly when the city of Newport Beach moved to embrace a sizeable portion of Irvine Industrial Complex."*** He then went on to say, ***"the Regents were now faced with three choices: To move forward and support incorporation, which could create a viable new city; or to move backward by opposing incorporation and thus kill hopes for a new city; or to take no position, which would be irresponsible."***

Regent Simon countered with a motion calling for ***"a delay in Regents' endorsement of the new city until the issue received more thorough study."*** Governor Reagan, who sat beside Simon, said, ***"the real question facing the board is whether Irvine will be one planned community or a number of communities dividing up our tax base."***

After further discussions the Regents voted on two motions. The first was Simons's asking for a delay. It lost 7-12 with one abstention. The final vote was on UC President Hitch's motion to ***"approve in principle the incorporation of an appropriate and viable city of not less than 10,000 acres, including the UCI campus."*** It won 18-2. The Regents also consented to participation by the Irvine Campus in incorporation procedures and authorized ***"the expenditure of \$25,000 for further Objective studies"*** on the issue. Simon grumbled about the \$25,000 authorization: ***"The Irvine Company spent***

***\$1-million on the plan, the county is spending \$500,000, and we are spending \$25,000. That's indicative of the way we do our planning.***

Thus the University joined the Irvine Company in support of incorporation and put its' considerable reputation on the table in support of the efforts currently being put forth by both the Company and citizen groups.

In the meanwhile, while the Regents were debating with Regent Simon whether to support incorporation or not the CCI had been conducting extensive studies on the impact of becoming an incorporated city. By October 22<sup>nd</sup> a committee spokesman Gary Dalzell reported, ***“we have prepared a summary which will soon be in the hands of the CCI Council members. And, they are satisfied that they have a comprehensive document, and are confident the Council will approve it.”*** He went on to say, ***“Once the committee reports and their summary have been approved by the CCI and filed with the Local Agency Formation Committee (LAFCO), the Council's job will be to get the word out.”*** To do this, Dalzell and his team had ***“scheduled a series of presentations to the press, the industrial and commercial representative and the homeowner associations in Irvine. In addition, the findings of the study committees were be telecast over the CATV Channels”*** made available by the Irvine Company.

To help them “get the word out” they recruited Harry Berg, the retired County Planner Director who was now a resident of Irvine. His public message was: ***“Only an informed electorate can continue to make the Irvine General Plan work. The plan will not take care of itself.”*** And that, ***“if we have only one city government to address ourselves to, informed voters can elect city officials who will be in sympathy with the objectives of the plan. If, however, our communities are split among several cities and the county, we will have to address our interests and arguments to all these jurisdictions.”*** Berg's linking the preservation of the Irvine General Plan to self-governance resonated with the community. The theme of Irvine being a planned community of villages had dominated the Company's messages from the day the concept had been introduced and by 1970 the residents had bought into it. Berg's message was only through the protection of self government could they be assured of preserving that way of life. It proved to be the one powerful message that over-powered all the petty anti-incorporation arguments that the opponents were soon to raise.

### **COUNTY SUPERVISORS APPROVE IRVINE COMPANY'S CENTRAL SECTOR MASTER PLAN**

In the meanwhile, the Company's long and frustrating efforts to have its' central sector master plan approved by the County planning commission concluded in its' approval on December 17, 1970 having been originally submitted over nine months earlier. So by mid-December the Company had an approved general plan and CCI had filed with LAFCO their intent to put the question of incorporation before the citizens of Irvine.

LAFCO held their first public hearing on the CCI's petition on January 6, 1971 at which time the proponents of incorporation were given their first opportunity to be heard. Speaking in favor of the petition were representatives of CCI, the Greater Irvine Industrial League, Dr. Aldrich, chancellor of the University and William Pereira who had originally conceived the idea.

At the second hearing, a week later, it was the opposition's turn. Other than a few Irvine citizens who spoke in favor of taking more time the only opposition came from representatives of the city of Santa Ana. The city manager, Carl Thornton, and mayor, Loren Grisset, rose to speak in opposition. They asked for more time and information. Their main objection, however, was that by enlarging the proposed city to cover the area between the Santa Ana and San Diego Freeways Santa Ana would effectively be blocked from expanding their city.

Robert Smith, attorney for the proponents, argued in rebuttal, ***“The commission has had ample time and ample data for study. In addition, there have been in-depth studies made in all the necessary areas and the subject has been covered more than adequately.”*** Smith concluded by stating, ***“Only Santa Ana, among the neighboring cities, has voiced any real objections. On the other hand, UCI, The Irvine Company and industrial community all approve the incorporation.”***

In conclusion, John Burton who had filed the petition for incorporation said, ***“If people like us are willing to take on the kinds of problems we are willing to take on, we deserve a basis in which to work. Irvine is this basis. We must preserve what we have.”***

At the conclusion of the public hearing the Commissioners closed the meeting and announced they would take the presentations into consideration and without any further hearings render a decision at their next meeting. On February 10<sup>th</sup> they announced their decision. On a three to two basis LAFCO approved the application for incorporation. The approval, however, was limited to only authorizing an incorporation election by Irvine's residents leaving the exact boundary to be decided by the County's Board of Supervisors.

But Santa Ana wasn't finished yet. Within days, the city sought a temporary restraining order against proceeding with an incorporation election. Attempts by The Irvine Company and members of CCI to resolve Santa Ana's objections would take much of the next two months.

## **IRVINE COMPANY BOARD DEBATES INCORPORATION**

While all the past years work toward incorporation was consistent with the 1960 agreement with the University and the plans we had been sharing with our Board the Company now needed to decide how much Company land would be included in the initial city boundaries. So at our April 13, 1971 Board meeting President Mason put the issue on the agenda. He brought the Board up to date on what had transpired over the previous three months and put before them a resolution authorizing management to ***“act for this Corporation in all matters relating to the proceedings for the incorporation of the City of Irvine.”***

Although we had shared with the Board the considerable time and efforts the CCI and other groups had devoted to the issue, Company Director Joan Irvine Smith began arguing against incorporation arguing Irvine's tax basis was not sufficient to support the services it needed and it's population was too small. President Mason and I countered by telling the Board that for months dozens of Irvine citizens had participated in extensive studies that confirmed that the city would have more than an adequate tax base and that these studies had been reviewed by LAFCO and they concurred. But nothing we said dissuaded her. Finally the Chairman called for a motion, which would authorize

management to “*act for this Corporation in all matters relating to the proceedings for the incorporation of the City of Irvine.*” The motion passed on a five to two vote with members Mrs. Smith and Keith Gaede voting against it. Six months later Mrs. Smith would go public with her objections.

With Board approval the only action we now needed was deciding how many acres of Company land would we include in the petition for incorporation. Whereas, in both the County Planning Commission and LAFCO hearings we had advocated the city’s ultimate size of 50,000-acres both CCI and the Company had agreed that the initial incorporation would only include the University lands and a portion of the future city that included existing developments and areas projected to be developed over the next five years. So in only days following the contested approval by the Company Board William Mason together with other executives signed a petition requesting an incorporation election for the proposed new city of Irvine. As a property owner the Company also designated 1,242 parcels of land (some 15,000-acres) to be included in the future city. Thus when added to the University and other non-Irvine Company property the initial city would encompass a total of 18,145-acres.

At the signing ceremony William Mason issued the following statement: “*By signing these petitions, we are pledging our land and ourselves to the people of the new city of Irvine. They have expressed an overwhelming desire to guide their own destinies; and we fully support that wish. We also fully share with them their expressed hopes to chart their future course in accordance with the concepts of long range master planning.*” Eleven-years had passed since William Pereira had introduced his vision of a city and university growing together. The University had graduated its’ first senior class. The future city would soon have over 20,000 residents. The Company was keeping its’ promise. Soon it would be up to the residents to decide if they were ready to take over the political and oversight reigns.

## SANTA ANA’S LAST STAB AT BLOCKING THE NEW CITY

With the Company’s and LAFCO’s approval in hand CCI’s next step was to seek approval of Irvine’s proposed boundaries from the County Board of Supervisors. However, having lost in their opposition before LAFCO Santa Ana quickly showed they hadn’t given up their opposition to the proposed incorporation. Within days of LAFCO’s approval Santa Ana filed a petition before the Orange County Superior Court seeking an injunction against holding the incorporation election, claiming that CCI had included in their application a 938-acre industrial park owned by the Irvine Company that the Company had agreed the city could annex “*some time in the future.*”

The industrial park, established in the mid-sixties, had quickly become the fastest growing park in the County. Located between the Marine Corps Lighter than Air station and the Orange County Airport, in 1963 following the disapproval of Santa Ana’s “strip” annexation battle the Company had signed an agreement it would **not** oppose Santa Ana’s annexation of the park after May 20, 1971. CCI responded that prior to that date it had included the park in their filing for the proposed City.

In an attempt to resolve this latest conflict, with the Company’s approval, CCI offered to withdraw the industrial park from the incorporation filing. Burton said, “*This*

*settlement agreement is an attempt to remove the last major obstacle to an election by the people of Irvine and the Irvine Company would win the legal battle. But as far as the City of Irvine is concerned, it could be a pyrrhic victory. Cityhood will eventually be delayed for a very long time.* Burton went on to say, *“With this delay, much could be lost to the people of Irvine through political maneuvering, piecemeal annexations, continuing lack of direct control over their own community and possible consequence of diminished sense of community.”* But CCI’s proposal apparently wasn’t enough because following a secret Santa Ana city council meeting; the City’s attorney confirmed that CCI’s offer had been rejected.

Commenting on the latest in a series of delays instituted by Santa Ana to block Irvine’s proceedings CCI Chairman Burton said, *“What Santa Ana really has in mind is what they said all along – the City of Irvine is a threat to Santa Ana’s domination of Orange County. They feel they must at least acquire the central portion of the Irvine Ranch.”* According to Burton, their proposed agreement would have required that Santa Ana agree not to challenge the incorporation *“by legal action or otherwise ... and further agree not to encourage, aid or in any way support such a challenge by any other party.”*

Santa Ana’s attorney’s response was that even if both CCI and the Company asked that the industrial park be removed from the filing because of the independence of both LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors they would not be legally bound to withdraw the acreage. And even if they did and the Company then agreed to annex the Park to Santa Ana it would still require the independent approval of LAFCO.

From the Company’s point of view Santa Ana’s reason for turning down the compromise didn’t ring true. While their concerns may have been legally correct it was highly unlikely that either agency would ignore both the property owner and CCI willingness to allow the park to be annexed to Santa Ana. Our suspicion was that Santa Ana still harbored its’ ambition to expand their city into the central part of the Ranch. So, in frustration, the Company responded by stating that: *“We hope somehow this whole issue can get out of the political arena so that the people of Irvine can move forward.”*

By late June attorneys for CCI, The Irvine Company and Santa Ana had presented their respective cases to Superior Court Judge Raymond Thompson and the city’s quest to become a city laid dormant until he ruled. It didn’t take him long. On a Friday in mid-July the judge, in a three-page ruling, denied Santa Ana’s writ of mandate and ruled that a 1963 agreement made between the Irvine Company and the City of Santa Ana was *“invalid for the reason that it purported to bind future city councils to legislative action contrary to public policy.”* Judge Thompson explained in his ruling, *“there has been a hearing before LAFCO concerning the boundaries of the proposed new City of Irvine at which hearing Santa Ana appeared and made objection and brought to the attention of that body its agreement with Irvine concerning the promised land. Presumably, LAFCO considered whatever equities and interests there were of the City of Santa Ana but nevertheless approved the boundaries of the new City as proposed.”* The judge went on to say, *“The question of boundaries may again be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors at which time Santa Ana will have further opportunity to object and present its contention as to its interests.”*

The battle over the industrial park continued politically even after the court denied Santa Ana’s suit and was played up in the local press with the Daily Pilot asserting,

***“Santa Ana, with the help of a few friendly county supervisors, attempted to get the Promised Land one way or another.”*** The battle took a bizarre turn on August 9<sup>th</sup> (1971) with what the Pilot called the ***“the seven second LAFCO meeting”*** during which ***“supervisors Robert Battin of Santa Ana and Ronald Caspers of Newport Beach, avowed Irvine Company foes, ousted commissioner Charles Pearson. Pearson was part of a three-member majority that on Feb. 10 had approved”*** the incorporation submittal. With Pearson no longer a member of LAFCO and Caspers taking his place Irvine’s majority support evaporated. But minutes later, as the paper reported, ***“legal hassles ensued, Pearson was reseated and the city boundaries were (again) set by LAFCO.***

## **THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THE NEXT STOP**

With the injunction out of the way the Board of Supervisors represented the last critical step toward a ballot on cityhood. That step was set for the second Wednesday in September 1971. By law Supervisors must conduct public hearings on incorporation to hear protests from landowners in the area as a precondition to setting an election date. With the majority of the land included in the request owned by the Irvine Company, the University and residents the likelihood of much objection was remote. John Burton, representing CCI, said he was hopeful that an approval would be attained in time for an election to be completed before the end of 1971.

What Burton didn’t know, but was soon to learn, was that Joan Irvine Smith, a member of the Company Board and voting 20% of the Company’s stock, was apposed to incorporation. On the day before the first incorporation hearing with the Board of Supervisors Mrs. Smith, whose home was in Middleburg, Virginia, had lunched with Supervisor Robert Battin. At that meeting she asked Battin to vote for a lengthy postponement of the cityhood proceedings. The next day Supervisors Battin and Ronald Caspers pushed for a 60-day delay, but the motion failed. The hearing was instead continued for just two weeks. Battin’s position was understandable since he represented Santa Ana but Caspers position seemed out of step with his constituents since he represented Irvine and Newport Beach. Caspers explained he was ***“concerned”*** about Mrs. Smith’s request, ***“because she owns 20% of Irvine stock.”***

Mrs. Smith, in an interview with the Daily Pilot, was quoted as saying the ***“City of Irvine incorporation would be premature and lead to the creation of slums.”*** As the Daily Pilot reported, ***“her views conflicted with those of Carl Thornton, Santa Ana’s city manager, who is also opposed to cityhood for Irvine because it would create a beautiful city for beautiful people leaving his city a slum, by contrast.”*** Thornton went on to say that he wants the Irvine area north of San Diego freeway in the city of Santa Ana confirming earlier reports that Santa Ana was interested in acquiring far more than the disputed 938-acre Irvine Industrial Park.

Andrew May, chairman of COIN (City of Irvine Now), reacted strongly to Mrs. Smith’s last-minute involvement in the incorporation battle. ***“Since when is self-government premature?”*** he asked. ***“Mrs. Smith is not a resident, not a landowner, not a voter,”*** said May, ***“so she should stay in Virginia which she evidently prefers. Her fight is with the Irvine Company. She should keep it in the board room where it***

***belongs.*** May concluded his comments by saying, ***“I believe, that a city council composed of residents will take much better care of us than supervisors who live in other cities.”***

Following the revelation that Mrs. Smith had gone public with her disapproval of the incorporation seven Irvine family members, all of whom lived in Orange County and owners of 23% of the Company’s stock, sent a letter to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors stating: ***“It is the opinion of the undersigned ... that the citizens who live within the proposed City of Irvine should be allowed to vote and determine for themselves by majority vote as to the incorporation of the City of Irvine.”***

CCI chairman John Burton commented on the letter of support from the other Irvine family members: ***“Since Supervisor Caspers is so interested in representing shares of the Irvine Company, perhaps he’d better consider these shareholders.”*** He then added, ***“Who does Supervisor Caspers really represent if he is willing to make his elected office a tool for Mrs. Smith’s private war?”*** Burton closed the war of words by saying, ***“The people of Irvine have shown incredible cohesiveness and spirit despite the delays. They have been winning and will continue to win until they are able to go to the polls and decide the issue themselves.”***

## **CITYHOOD ELECTION GETS GO AHEAD**

The September 29<sup>th</sup> issue of The Irvine World News headline read: ***“Supervisors Say Go to Cityhood for Irvine.”*** The story under the headline read: ***“Irvine cityhood proponents, crowding into the Orange county Supervisors hearing room, heard the word Wednesday giving them the right to vote December 21 on incorporation of the proposed city of Irvine. Approving the city boundaries as those decided upon by the local Agency Formation Commission.”*** Board chairman Robert Battin cast the only negative vote. The hearing room erupted in cheers and applause when fifth district supervisor Ronald Caspers introduced the motion to set the boundaries and the incorporation date. During the discussion prior to the vote Supervisor Ralph Clark had indicated he favored a four-week delay allowing time for UCI to make further studies on a 10,000-acre university city.

CCI chairman John Burton told the supervisors ***“We’re tired of being in the middle,”*** emphasizing that outside forces of ***“Norton Simon, UCI, the feud between Santa Ana and the Irvine Company and the wishes of Irvine heiress Joan Irvine Smith,”*** had already delayed the incorporation.

***“The spirit of the new community,”*** commented Burton and ***“our belief in the promise of a master planned community”*** is what are behind our request for an early election date.

Opposing the boundary lines were representatives from Santa Ana led by Mayor Lorin Grisct and Mrs. Smith’s attorney, Lyndol Young. Santa Ana City Manager Carl Thornton complained that Santa Ana had not been allowed to tell its story. ***“We’ve been gavelled down and not permitted to tell our story”*** that ***“the new city was neglecting its obligation to the minorities.”*** He repeated his original charge that ***“providing a beautiful city for the beautiful people doesn’t represent social planning.”*** He concluded by saying, ***“the county will die under the impact of this type of development (City of Irvine) or go forward under the County’s direction.”*** Responding to

Thornton's charge, CCI attorney, Timothy Strader urged the supervisors remove from the record "***the ramblings of Thornton on the racist allegations,***" noting that Santa Ana had created its own problem.

## THE FINAL PUSH TO CITYHOOD

With the approval of the Board of Supervisors it was now decision time for the citizens of Irvine. They already used the name Irvine on their return addresses courtesy of the United States Post Office. The County Sheriff and fire department paroled their streets and put out their fires. And their local community associations and local improvement districts maintained their parks and swept their streets. So what was to be gained by taking on the cost and hassle of their own city government?

For many, they had bought into the idea of the new town, its distinct villages and its Master Plan. But by September 29, 1971 the covert actions of Santa Ana and Newport Beach nibbling at the edges of their community, the Board of Supervisors flip-flopping in the approval of the Company's general plan for much of their future city and finally Mrs. Smith's and Norton Simon's opposition without having engaged in any substantive dialog with any of the citizen groups studying cityhood sent the message that unless they incorporated now they were in danger of losing that opportunity forever. Whether there were enough of them willing to vote yes on December 21<sup>st</sup> we were soon to find out.

The October 14, 1971 issue of The Irvine World News led off with the heading: "***Dozens Seek Posts on Irvine's City Council.***" Although there was still two months before we would officially know if the citizens favored cityhood the second headline read: "***Burton Not Doubtful: We Will Have City.***"

With cityhood as a given the only remaining issue was the election of the city's first city council. And the lead story read: "***The list of candidates for charter seats in the City of Irvine is growing. Thirty-one candidates have taken out their papers for candidacy; 17 have returned them to insure that their names will be on the ballot, and one additional man has indicated his intention to run. Names of Irvine residents long active in the incorporation movement have emerged as candidates, supplemented by others who have opposed incorporation, and by still others whose political persuasions are unvoiced as yet.***"

Most were college graduates with some having advanced degrees. They covered the spectrum of professions including lawyers, pilots, teachers, economists, financial managers, designers and housewives. Most were running as individuals. Some ran as teams, either by their own choice, or as slates from their community associations. All but one candidate supported the incorporation. The issues they espoused were open space, taxes, local control, master planning, provisions of adequate schools to meet future growth, addition of low-income housing and protection of the environment. Neither of the two organizations most active in the election, CCI and COIN, endorsed any of the candidates.

In early December, as the campaign for cityhood was nearing a vote, first Joan Irvine Smith and then a State Senator Dennis Carpenter injected themselves into the campaign.

On Tuesday, December 7, 1971 Mrs. Smith spoke to some 500 students and citizens in the UC Irvine Science Lecture Hall voicing her previously expressed

opposition to incorporation. The following day she became front-page news in the Newport Beach Daily Pilot with the following headline: ***“Heiress Rips Cityhood – Fires Salvoes in UCI Talk.”*** Reporter Barbara Kreibich piece in part read: ***“The tangled web of Irvine family fortunes and tragedies was unraveled before a capacity audience Tuesday as Joan Irvine Smith spoke out against what she termed the premature incorporation of the proposed city of Irvine.”*** The majority of her remarks was devoted to her years long battle with the James Irvine Foundation that controlled the Company and had been created by her grandfather. Kreibich reported Mrs. Smith saying, ***“the move to bulldoze the premature incorporation of the new city is nothing more than a power play on the part of the corporation to usurp control over the lands from the orange County Board of Supervisors.....That would be done by installing a company-controlled city administration which would carry out the required plans for development.”***

She went on to say: ***“Premature development of the ranch lands, would damage my investment as a stockholder, reduce your property values and destroy the university environment for the students.”*** The article closed by her saying, ***“she would definitely support incorporation at such time as the Foundation’s control of the Irvine Company is removed and there is sufficient population, 20,000 to 30,000 to maintain a city without confiscatory taxes.”***

The story about Mrs. Smith’s UCI speech was followed with reactions from the candidates running for office, with the following headline: ***“Irvine Council Hopefuls Unswayed by Heiress Talk.”*** Reporter George Leidal then reported the following reactions: ***“All candidates contacted today suggested Mrs. Smith was unaware of the population of the area proposed for incorporation when she suggested the new city should await a population of at least 20,000” since the current population is “20,000 not the mere 10,000 cited by Ms. Smith.”*** Leidal went on to report: ***“Those candidates interviewed today felt what Mrs. Smith was really saying Tuesday was “hold up incorporation until I have time to gain control of the Irvine Company.”***

In my view Mrs. Smith’s attempts to intervene merely strengthened the resolve of the residents and candidates to take control of their city. They believed they ran the two-year process they had gone through and they felt empowered by the process. Neither Mrs. Smith nor any other non-resident, including politicians nor Irvine Company officials was going to take that choice away from them.

Just days before the election State Senator Dennis Carpenter suddenly injected himself into the race. In a letter addressed to the residents he endorsed a five-person slate for founding council members. The letter came out of the blue since he had not participated in any of the discussions or hearings to date. What ever his motivation the community reaction was decidedly negative. Irvine’s residents had had enough of outsiders injecting themselves into their affairs. As a result even those candidates endorsed sought to distant themselves from Carpenter and as result only two of his endorsed candidates were elected.

## ELECTION DAY

On December 21, 1971 the polls had barely closed before it was clear that Irvine's residents overwhelmingly supported incorporation. When the final vote was tallied incorporation had won by more than a 2-1 margin. They had also elected a five-member city council, but "generally avoided selecting "slate" or **"teamed"** candidates. They were: William M. Fischbach, John Burton, Henry Quigley, Mrs. Gabrielle Pryor, and E. Ray Quigley. The organization that backed three of the winners, interestingly enough, was Irvine Tomorrow that campaigned against incorporation taking the position it was premature. Nevertheless they backed Fischbach, Pryor and Henry Quigley apparently believing that if incorporation passed they would act independent from any company or organization.

The following day the Daily Pilot reported that Fischbach **"apparently is destined to become the first mayor of the dream city. If the council offers me the post, I will accept, he said after outpolling the heavy favorite, John Burton, chairman of the Council of the Communities of Irvine."** Henry Quigley and Mrs. Pryor both pledged their support of Fischbach **"if for no other reason than he was the top vote-getter."**

The Pilot went on to comment: **"The Irvine Company has its city and Company President William R. Mason probably couldn't be happier."** They then added: **"He spoke not of Orange County supervisors, whose actions before now have been attributed by many, as the main reason there is a city."**

The article then concluded with Mason's saying: **"While we share and have shared the views of the majority of the people of Irvine on the issue of incorporation tonight's victory is totally theirs, as is the ultimate responsibility now to create a truly model new town.**

**They have the will and I am confident the capability to make the 26<sup>th</sup> city of Orange County the kind of planned community in which the entire city can take pride. We will work with the new city government in every way possible to realize this goal. We have cast our futures together."**

Of the five victorious city council candidates, Mason added: **"As far as the winning council candidates are concerned, they have my heartiest congratulations. The people in their wisdom appear to have chosen a well-balanced team to undertake a very challenging task. It is unfortunate that several other highly qualified candidates did not win, but I am sure many of them will be contributing their time and good sense to the city of Irvine in the days and years to come."**

## IRVINE'S NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL TAKES CONTROL

The new city council held its first official meeting on the evening of December 28, 1971 in the Science Lecture hall on the UCI campus. Minutes after the meeting was opened with a slip of tongue the deputy county clerk announced, **"may I call this official meeting of the City Council of the city of the – Irvine -- Company to order please?"** Both the new council and the audience of some 350 persons immediately met the clerk's slip with uproarious delight.

William Fischbach was elected mayor and Henry Quigley elected mayor pro-tempore both by a 3 to 2 vote. They then enacted a 90-day freeze on building or grading

permits, promised to study rezoning approved in recent weeks by the county and by so doing made it clear to all they were now in charge.

Two days later, George Leidal writing for the Daily Pilot had this to say: ***“It isn’t every day a reporter gets a chance to observe the birth of a new city. Somehow the past few weeks have led me to feel like I’ve just been assigned to cover, via time capsule, the sailing of the Mayflower. People I’ve met in Irvine, thus far, exude an infectious spirit of hope for their new city. The seas the new city government and the city’s 18,000 residents will sail in the next few months are smoothed by the thought that this city, unlike any other in history, may become something other than pretty, suburbia-perfect new Town. It may indeed set the standard for a new city.*”**

***The difference between Irvine and any other new town is that while others are truly company towns, dominated by the master planning of the developers, Irvine is the lone experiment in residential land use now controlled by a citizen selected city government.”***

## A RETROSPECTIVE

As I reflect on more than thirty years of Irvine’s cityhood I personally believe George Leidal got it right. Incorporating Irvine in its infancy may indeed have ***“set the standard for a new city.”*** City councils and mayors have come and gone. Irvine Company management and ownership have changed. UCI is now overseen by its forth chancellor. But during each step and change along the way the new players have had to accommodate their respective interest to the others and most particularly to what is best for Irvine.

During the early years of the city’s formation I likened the city council, company and the university to a three-legged stool. We each played an essential and unique role in the city’s development. What is essential, however, is that no leg of that stool become larger than the others. From time to time events and circumstances may have caused one leg to become larger or smaller than the others, but before long the resulting instability of the stool signaled a need to bring it back into balance.

Today Irvine is home to well over 135,000 men, women and children. Thousands of companies now put Irvine on their stationery. Irvine children attend one of the finest public school systems in the state. The city boasts that it has more parks, open-space and bicycle paths than any other city in the county. And with the recent announcement by The Irvine Company of the addition of 11,000 acres of open space to be added to the nearly 40,000 acres previously committed on the Irvine Ranch, Irvine is surrounded by a giant buffer that defines its boundaries. Planners, governmental officials and private developers from around the world seek information about what has been described as the “most successful new town built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.” UCI will soon reach a student population of 20,000 and is rated as one of the finest public universities in the country.

I’ve been privileged to have been associated with Irvine even before its birth. Like all cities Irvine has its warts as well as virtues. I wish there was more affordable housing and less dependence on the automobile. But all in all, we members of the three-legged stool have reason to be proud of what Irvine has become. George Leidal’s prophecy has in most respects become reality. Irvine has ***“indeed set the standard for a new City.”***