

Garden Pathways

2010 "Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"

Cathy Butler



Cathy Butler has a gigantic heart for the heart of Bakersfield. Always the number one cheerleader for downtown Bakersfield, Cathy is everywhere with blazing passion and a million ideas. Cathy's heartfelt enthusiasm, her love for the community, and unceasing dedication permeate all aspects of her involvement on a myriad projects. Cathy is a priceless gift to Bakersfield.

For over 35 years, Cathy has been a tireless advocate and driving force in the development of downtown Bakersfield, serving as secretary, office manager, and now, president of the Downtown Business Association. Cathy's relentless and sacrificial efforts have greatly improved the quality of life in the heart of Bakersfield.

In 1983, Cathy helped to restore the Bakersfield Christmas Parade after a twelve-year hiatus. Two years later, she initiated the Downtown Street Faire – drawing many to her beloved downtown – a harbinger of the emerging arts district, the Mill Creek project, Marriott Hotel, Maya Cinema, and the restoration of the Fox Theater and the Padre Hotel.

Cathy, dubbed "Queen of the Fox," led the successful 1994 "Save the Fox" campaign in which the Downtown Business Association raised \$100,000 for the Fox Theater Foundation to purchase the theater. Cathy's persevering efforts are commemorated by a star embedded in the sidewalk on the "Walk of Stars." For leading the charge to save the Fox, Cathy was honored in 1995 at the state capitol by the late State of California Minority Leader, Senator Ken Maddy, as his choice for "Women of the Year." This year, on Christmas Day, the Fox Theater will celebrate its 80th anniversary.

In 1988, Cathy served as president of the California Downtown Association, one of the strongest Downtown organizations in the country. Established in Bakersfield in 1971 by a cadre of businessmen, CDA today represents well over 250 cities.

Cathy continues to advance and champion the arts as president of the Arts Council of Kern. She has served in the past as president of the Spotlight Theater, Bakersfield Christmas Parade, and Bakersfield Host Lions.

This year Cathy is serving on her East High 40th Anniversary Class Reunion Committee.

Cathy cherishes her very supportive husband of 35 years, Clarence. "He lets me do whatever I want as long as he doesn't have to attend!" Cathy is forever grateful to her loving parents, Stan and Lorraine Smock. "My mother would have been so proud to see me receive this recognition."