

# *Distinguished Alumnus Award*

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## Mr. Walt Bratton

The Yakima Valley Community College Alumni Association is pleased to announce Mr. Walt Bratton as this year's recipient of the YVCC *Distinguished Alumnus Award*. Bratton has devoted his life to the support of parks and recreation in cities across the United States. He is currently working as the Director of Parks, Recreation, and Economic Activities/Development for the city of Ruidoso, New Mexico.

Walt Bratton grew up in Grandview, Washington. The son of a parks and recreation director, his love for the profession started at a young age working beside his father and assisting with daily operations. In the late 1980's he attended Yakima Valley Community College on a basketball scholarship. After completing his associate of arts degree he transferred to Washington State University to work toward a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation management. Bratton graduated with honors and was offered a full academic scholarship to attend Arizona State University to pursue a master's degree. He later went on to earn a master's degree in public administration from Wichita State University.

In 1993 he began his career working in Queen Creek, Arizona as the Parks and Recreation Director. He spent the next 10 years working for various parks departments in several states including Arizona, Kansas, and California. In 2004, Bratton decided to take a sabbatical and spent time traveling in the United States, Europe, and South America. Returning to work in 2005, he accepted the position of Director of Parks and Recreation in Green River, Wyoming, a position he held until early 2011. In 2013 after working in Florida for nearly two years, he moved to his current position in New Mexico.

Throughout his career Bratton has served numerous community organizations and committees. He is currently a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), New Mexico Recreation and Park Association, and the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration. He has also been published several times in the Wyoming Recreation and Parks Association *FOCUS Magazine*, and in local newspapers.

In addition, he has received many honors for his commitment to public service including the 2010 *Distinguished Fellow Award* from the NRPA. In 2010 and again in 2011 he led the city of Green River, Wyoming to the finals for the NRPA's *National Gold Medal Award*. This was the first time in over 40 year history of the award that a city in Wyoming was named as a national finalist.

"It is an honor and privilege to receive the *Distinguished Alumnus Award*," stated Walt Bratton. "YVCC provided me the educational building blocks necessary for future successes at Washington State University and Arizona State University. I enjoyed my time at YVCC playing basketball and concentrating on attaining my associate of arts degree," he concluded.