Redwood ACLU Gives Fifth Annual Patriot Award To Former Arcata Councilmember Dave Meserve

At the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Redwood Chapter, American Civil Liberties Union last month, local civil rights awarded their highest honor, the Patriot Award, to Dave Meserve for his long-time work to defend the civil liberties of people across the North Coast. He will be presented with this honor at the Annual Meeting and Patriot Award Gala to be held on Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 6 p.m. at the Red Lion Hotel in Eureka.

"Dave Meserve has the distinct honor of having been nominated every year since the inception of this award." said Redwood ACLU chair Christina Allbright. "His groundbreaking ordinance to prevent Arcata city officials from implementing the unconstitutional elements of the USA Patriot Act acted as an inspiration to all of us working to restore the Bill of Rights."

The irony was not lost on the local Redwood Chapter Board when they voted unanimously to give the Patriot Award to Meserve last month -- that same week, a federal appeals court ruled another provision of the Bush administration's Patriot Act unconstitutional. Their repeated use of "national security letters" - to prevent those who received secret document demands from disclosing this unwarranted search of their papers and property -- wrongly placed the burden on NSL recipients to initiate judicial review of these gag orders.

Just over a year before, a federal judge ruled unconstitutional provisions within the Patriot Act which allowed the government to obtain search warrants without probable cause. The national ACLU continues on several fronts its challenges against the unconstitutional abrogation of constitutional values.

"Arcata was way out in front on this fight against the unwarranted expansion of federal snooping and surveillance," said Redwood ACLU boardmember Jack Munsee. "Meserve's support of police review for the Arcata Police Department throughout his term in office was also a source of inspiration to our efforts to establish law enforcement accountability measures across Humboldt County."

Meserve will be honored at a reception at the Red Lion Hotel, along with appetizers and short speeches, to be followed by our Election Reform Forum at 6:30, where invited speakers from across the county, the state and the political spectrum will outline the challenges and opportunities to improve the functioning of local elections.

For more information, call the ACLU Hotline at 707-442-4419 or visit redwoodaclu.blogspot.com.