

HALL OF FAME



Mike Nilson

Mike Nilson **MINOT PARK DISTRICT** **2001**

Mike Nilson was the ninth individual elected to the NDRPA Hall of Fame. A member of NDRPA since its inception, Nilson acted as president-elect (1976) and president (1978 and 1979) and served on its board of directors (1993). He was involved in the development of the organization and helped develop its bylaws.

A former marine, Nilson graduated from Minot State University in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in education, business, and history. He began his career at the Minot Park District as the assistant director of parks and would later become director of parks, park development officer, and park board commissioner.

During his career, Nilson established a neighborhood park concept for Minot and built 12 new parks in the city. Often serving as park police officer, zookeeper, and veterinary assistant, he brought home baby animals for his family to care for due to limited staff. Without his dedication, the Roosevelt Park Zoo would not be thriving today. His love for animals was apparent with the founding of the Greater Minot Zoological Society and his work obtaining accreditation for the Roosevelt Park Zoo through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums in 1984. Nilson also helped write and obtain the grant for the 10-mile trail connecting the city of Minot with Minot Air Force Base.

Nilson was awarded the Sertoma Club of Minot's Service to Mankind Award, the Distinguished Service Award from Midwest (1980), and the Fellow Award from NDRPA (1998).

He was also active throughout the Minot community in American Legion, AMVETS, VFW, the Chamber of Commerce, Minot's Commission on Aging, and the Minot Exchange Club.

Nilson passed away in 2014.

All NDRPA Hall of Fame members are recognized with plaques at the North Dakota Sports Hall of Fame in the Jamestown Civic Center.

Advancing parks and recreation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

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