



TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Chronology of Tacoma Mayors

From the year New Tacoma and Tacoma City consolidated

Compiled by Bill Baarsma, April 2020

Number	Name and Notes	Year Elected
1	<b>General John Sprague</b> Sprague was elected as the interim mayor after consolidation and before the regular elections held in May of 1884. He ran unopposed.	1883
2	<b>Robert Jacob Weisbach</b> Weisbach organized and led the “Tacoma Method” leading to the expulsion of Tacoma’s Chinese residents.	1884
3	<b>Jacob Mann</b> Mann came to Tacoma nearly penniless, was hired on as a bartender at the Blackwell Hotel and shrewdly parlayed his resources in real estate purchases including the property where the Provident Building now stands. He was elected mayor on the “anti-Chinese” ticket. Notably, he was a litigant in a land dispute case with the Tacoma Land Company that was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. Mann lost.	1886
4	<b>Ira Town</b> Ira’s great grandson found that Mayor Town was in an unmarked grave at Tacoma Cemetery. He contacted THS and the Society raised the funds for an appropriate grave marker.	1887
5	<b>Henry Drum</b> Drum’s home still stands at 9 Saint Helens Avenue. It has been converted into offices.	1888
6	<b>Samuel Adams Wheelright</b> Wheelright apparently took his own life while living in Chicago during the great depression of 1893.	1889
7	<b>Stuart Rice</b> Rice was the first mayor after statehood. A home rule charter was enacted during his term.	1890
8	<b>George Kandle</b> Kandle was the first mayor elected under the Mayor-Council Charter enacted by the voters. His granddaughter donated money to the Park District for a park—Kandle Park in Tacoma’s West End.	1891



9	<b>Herbert Huson</b> Huson was embroiled in a law suit filed against Charles Wright over the City's purchase of Tacoma Light and Power from Wright. Wright never returned to Tacoma and died before the litigation was fully resolved.	1892
10	<b>Edward Orr</b> After a disputed re-election effort against Angelo Fawcett, where Orr was removed from office by the courts, he traveled north to Alaska to seek a fortune in the Klondike gold rush. He established a successful stage coach company and became active in Republican Party politics. Ironically, he lost an election to fellow Tacoma transplant James Wickersham for a territorial seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.	1893
11	<b>Angelo Vance Fawcett</b> Fawcett was seated in a disputed election with Orr by vote of the State Supreme Court.	1898
12	<b>Johnson Nickeus</b> Mayor Nickeus was indicted by a grand jury for allegedly accepting a \$12,500 bribe in the settlement of the City's case against Charles C. Wright over the purchase of Tacoma light and Water. After being arrested, he was released from jail on a \$750 bond. He strongly denied his guilt. He was the third Tacoma Mayor indicted and arrested.	1898
13	<b>Louis Campbell</b> Campbell was mayor on July 4, 1900 when the worst trolley accident in recorded history occurred in Tacoma. There were 44 people killed. Campbell joined in the rescue effort.	1900
14	<b>George Wright</b> The Green River water pipeline was proposed during Wright's term.	1904
15	<b>John Linck</b> Link had impeachment charges filed against him that were dismissed. He was the last mayor under the Mayor-Council form of government.	1907
	<b>Angelo V. Fawcett</b> Elected as the first mayor under the Commission form of government.	1909
16	<b>William W. Seymour</b> Seymore replaced Fawcett by a recall election.	1910



	<b>Angelo V. Fawcett</b> Fawcett elected for a third term as mayor by a landslide vote.	1914
17	<b>Crocket M. Riddell</b> Riddell defeats Fawcett. Serves during the great pandemic of the Spanish Flu.	1918
	<b>Angelo V. Fawcett</b> Fawcett is elected to a fourth term at the age of 80.	1922
18	<b>Melvin G. Tennent</b> Tennent defeats Fawcett. Tennent resigns from office during a council meeting.	1929
19	<b>James G. Newbegin</b> Newbegin is appointed to replace Tennent. He serves when the USS Lexington provide power for Tacoma.	1929
	<b>Melvin G. Tennent</b> Tennent is elected to second term.	1930
20	<b>George Smitley</b> In 1914, Smitley was appointed secretary and manager of the Tacoma Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. In that capacity, he led the effort to raise funds needed for the construction of the 1916 Elks Temple now the home of McMenamins. In 1924, he joined his father as a co-owner of a concrete manufacturing company. Ten years later, he was elected mayor in his first run for public office.	1934
21	<b>Dr. John C. Seigle</b> Seigle was the first Tacoma born mayor. He was a dentist by profession. He died in office during the first year of his term.	1938
22	<b>J.J. Kaufman</b> Kaufman was the second appointed mayor. He did not run in the special election held after Seigle's death.	1939
23	<b>Harry P. Cain</b> Cain won the special election in an odd twist after finishing third in the primary. Friday before the election, the top vote getter died of a heart attack. Over the weekend prior to the Tuesday election, the council placed Cain's name on the ballot. He won over former mayor Melvin Tennent.	1940
24	<b>C. Val Fawcett</b> Val Fawcett was the son of Angelo Vance Fawcett. It was the first time the son of a mayor was elected to the post.	1946



25	<b>John Anderson</b> Anderson was the last mayor elected under the Commission form of government. In November, 1952 the voters approved a Council-Manager form of government.	1950
26	<b>Harold Tollefson</b> Tollefson was appointed mayor by the council. In 1958, citizens approved a charter amendment directly electing the mayor.	1954
	<b>John Anderson</b> Anderson was appointed mayor thus became the first and only mayor to serve under the Commission and Council-Manager forms of government.	1956
27	<b>Ben Hanson</b> Hanson became the first directly elected mayor under the Council-Manager form of government.	1958
	<b>Harold Tollefson</b> Tollefson was elected as the President of the National League of Cities in 1966. He was a confidant of Vice President Humphrey and friend of President Johnson.	1962
28	<b>A.L. Slim Rasmussen</b> Slim ran for mayor after being gerrymandered out of his legislative district while serving in the State Senate. Elections were changed to the fall of odd numbered years.	1967
29	<b>Gordon Johnston</b> Gordon defeated Rasmussen by one of the closest margins in history—one percent of the vote. It was his first run for public office.	1969
30	<b>Mike Parker</b> Parker, at age 30, became the youngest person to be elected mayor. He promoted the building of the Tacoma Dome.	1977
31	<b>Doug Sutherland</b> Sutherland went on to be elected Pierce County Executive and State Lands Commissioner after leaving office as mayor.	1981
32	<b>Karen Vialle</b> Vialle was the first woman elected mayor. The longest strike of city workers in history occurred during her term. She led the effort to purchase Foss Waterway land for cleanup and redevelopment.	1989
33	<b>Jack Hyde</b> Hyde died two weeks into his term. He had served on the city council during the 1980's.	1993



TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

34	<b>Harold Moss</b> Moss was appointed mayor to replace Hyde. He was the first African-American to serve as mayor.	1994
35	<b>Brian Ebersole</b> Ebersole had served as State Speaker of the House before becoming mayor. The city built the largest municipally owned telecommunications system in North America during his term.	1995
36	<b>Mike Crowley</b> Crowley was appointed mayor after the resignation of Ebersole. Ebersole was appointed to serve as president of Bates Vocational College.	2001
37	<b>Bill Baarsma</b> Foss Waterway was cleaned up and the Museum of Glass opened during Baarsma's term. UW-Tacoma became a four-year campus.	2001
38	<b>Marilyn Strickland</b> Strickland greeted Xi Jinping, president of China, to Tacoma. She led the effort that resulted in the passage of the largest street repair revenue issue in city history. She became the first person and woman of color to be directly elected mayor.	2009
39	<b>Victoria Woodards</b> Woodards resigned from her council seat to run for mayor. She led the city during the coronavirus pandemic of 2020. Woodards was the second woman of color to be elected mayor.	2017

Last updated: May 2, 2020