



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mar. 13, 2026

Contact:

Phil Pitchford

Public Information Officer

951-826-5975

ppitchford@riversideca.gov

City of Riverside Creates Award to Honor Duane and Kelly Roberts and Visionaries Who Furthered City's Advancement

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside has created the Duane and Kelly Roberts City of Riverside Extraordinary Achievement Award to recognize Riverside visionaries and has named the Roberts' as the initial recipients.

The 6-0 vote on Tuesday (3/10) came at the urging of City Councilmember Chuck Conder, who proposed the idea. He praised Kelly Roberts and the late Duane Roberts, who died in November, for bringing back to life the historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa.

Roberts' purchase of the historic hotel in 1992 and the subsequent re-opening is widely credited with kicking off the revitalization of downtown Riverside. Conder noted that the Mission Inn was closed and wrapped in chain-link fence when he arrived in Riverside almost 40 years ago.

"Then two visionaries came along," Conder said. "They knew what the Mission Inn was. They knew what it should be, what it could be, and what it would be with their help."

City Councilmember Philip Falcone, who represents the downtown area, where the Mission Inn is located, agreed.

"What would we have without that great investment?" he asked.

Conder noted in a report to fellow council members that he anticipated the award would be presented to "visionaries, innovators, constructors, leaders, and notable men and women who have significantly contributed to the history of Riverside." He said he expected other initial recipients would be Mission Inn founder Frank Miller and John W. North, who founded Riverside.

"We run the risk of losing that history if we are not celebrating those names and keeping them alive," Conder said.