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For Immediate Release

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Lifetime Achievement Award Presented to Downers Grove Park District Leader

Hinsdale, IL– On January 30, 2026, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) honored William ‘Bill’ McAdam, Executive Director of the Downers Grove Park District with the IPRA Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement Award, for his commitment and lifetime of service to parks, recreation, and conservation in Illinois. Mr. McAdam was recognized during the IPRA Awards Program at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The IPRA Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement Award was established to honor Robert Artz’s legacy of service to the park and recreation profession. The recipient’s efforts have had a lasting impact and created awareness of the importance of parks and recreation among peers and in the community they serve.

Over his distinguished 35-year career, Bill McAdam has left an indelible mark on Illinois' parks and recreation field, transforming communities through his tireless dedication to public service, land conservation, and mentorship. Bill's legacy is defined by his visionary pursuit of land acquisition and public access. Throughout his career, he has been directly responsible for securing over 500 acres of public land, creating spaces where Illinois residents can connect with nature, build healthy lifestyles, and strengthen community bonds.

Bill was instrumental in the creation of beloved parks in Downers Grove, including Gelwicks Park, Lyman Woods, McCollum Park, and Doerhoefer Park. His leadership extended statewide as IPRA Board Chair in 2005 and as a four-time ProConnect mentor - inspiring emerging leaders in the field.

Since 2014, Bill has served as a commissioner for his lifelong home district in Lemont, the very place where his journey began as a teenage lifeguard. As President, he led a community engagement campaign that resulted in a \$17 million referendum passing with 71% approval.

“It is an honor to congratulate Bill on being recognized by his peers with this meaningful and prestigious award. The breadth of ways in which Bill has advanced both the profession and the Downers Grove community is truly impressive. IPRA is proud to recognize him for his many contributions - reflected not only in this award, but in his extensive list of accolades over many years,” said Suzi Wirtz, IOM, Executive

Director of IPRA. “Bill truly embodies leadership and serves as a noteworthy example for others in the profession.”

Bill McAdam’s career reflects a lifelong commitment to enriching communities through parks, recreation, and conservation, making him a deserving recipient of this honor.

A complete list of IPRA award winners is available on the IPRA website, Lipra.org.

Established in 1944, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) serves over 3,000 park, recreation, and conservation professionals throughout the state, and is a national leader in providing premier education, networking, and resources. For more information about IPRA, its board and mission, please visit the IPRA website: www.Lipra.org.

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