



GARY M. PETERSON

Early on the morning of Monday, April 30, 2007, Gary Peterson found himself part of a crowd of horrified neighbors watching members of the D.C. Fire Department extinguish the fire that left the Eastern Market a smoldering wreck. All around him, people were saying they wanted to make donations to help the market's merchants cope with the disaster. When Nicky Cymrot, President of the Capitol Hill Community Foundation, turned to Gary and asked if he would head such a fund, he did not hesitate to say yes. By the time the temporary market opened in September, Gary had made countless trips to the market to talk to the merchants about what they would need to get back to work. He had attended many meetings and had spent almost every Saturday and Sunday of the summer at the red Capitol Hill Community Foundation tent near the market selling t-shirts, accepting donations and telling people about the status of plans for the market.

Gary came to Washington, D.C. in 1969 from Iowa where he had grown up (in Sioux City), attended college (in Ames), and was at law school (in Iowa City). Having been drafted into the army, he was working as a typist at the Defense Language Institute at the Anacostia Annex to the Navy Yard. A dinner invitation from Iowa Congressman Wylie Mayne and his wife, the parents of a close friend from high school, brought him to Capitol Hill. "Gee," he remembers thinking, "this is a nice neighborhood." He has lived here on and off ever since. As a lawyer at the Justice Department, Gary specialized in issues relating to the use of public lands and, later, was manager of the Environment and Natural Resources Division

there. He tried upwards of a hundred cases and traveled extensively, including to Alaska where he provided trial support in the complex legal case resulting from the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Gary's first Hill landlord, Austin Beall, recruited him to drive a jitney for the Capitol Hill Restoration Society House Tour in 1970 and he has been volunteering ever since. He and his wife, Trudy, have each served as president of the Restoration Society and Gary has carved out an area of particular expertise as chairman of the Society's important, and sometimes contentious, Zoning Committee. He is now a member of the taskforce that is rewriting the fifty-year old D.C. zoning regulations.

Following his retirement from the federal government, Gary spent six years in Budapest and Geneva where Trudy was establishing archives for Central European University and for the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees. He loved Budapest where he kept busy by occasionally teaching short courses in environmental studies at Central European University and doing the family marketing and other household tasks made time-consuming by Hungary's "post-Communist chaos" -- like standing in line for hours at the Post Office to pay bills in person.

Gary returns regularly to Iowa, to the farm where Trudy grew up and which she now owns, but "home" is definitely Capitol Hill.