

**Florida Recreation and Park Association, Inc.  
2022 Lifetime Award**

**Nomination Form**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INDIVIDUAL MAKING THE NOMINATION – MUST BE AN FRPA MEMBER**

*(will be reviewed and scored as part of the Award submission)*

<b>Nominator Name</b>	Richard Durr, Michael Wirsing
<b>Nominator's Address</b>	100 E. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street
<b>City/State/Zip</b>	Sanford, FL 32771
<b>Nominator Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:rdurr@seminolecountyfl.gov">rdurr@seminolecountyfl.gov</a> <a href="mailto:mwirsing@seminolecountyfl.gov">mwirsing@seminolecountyfl.gov</a>
<b>Nominator Phone</b>	407-665-2001
<b>Nominator Relationship to Nominee</b>	Co-worker
<b>Name of Nominee</b>	Joseph R. Abel
<b>Nominee Address</b>	2215 Earleaf Ct
<b>City/State/Zip</b>	Longwood, FL 32779
<b>Nominee Agency</b>	Seminole County BCC
<b>Nominee Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:Jabel12@cfl.rr.com">Jabel12@cfl.rr.com</a>
<b>Nominee Job Title</b>	Retired Deputy County Manager
<b>Does this nominee represent an underrepresented population?</b>	No

**Narrative #1: NOMINATOR’S NARRATIVE (35 points max):** Having reviewed the criteria to be nominated for the FRPA Lifetime Award, attach no more than two pages (1.5 line spaced) detailing why you believe the individual being nominated is deserving of this recognition and what awards the nominee has received for serving FRPA and/or the profession. This is more than a cover letter. It should be thorough and specific.

## Florida Recreation and Park Association, Inc. 2022 Lifetime Award

**FRPA SERVICE (30 points max)**

*Nominator may contact the FRPA office to verify service record.*

What elected or appointed position on the FRPA Board of Directors has the nominee held? (list position and years held)

Position	Dates Served
FRPA Board of Directors, President Elect – <b>1 Year</b>	9/1/99-8/31/00
FRPA Board of Directors, President – <b>1 Year</b>	9/23/00-8/31/01
FRPA Board of Directors, Past President – <b>2 Years</b>	9/1/01-8/31/03

What State Committee, Section, or Task Force did the nominee chair? (list committee and years Chaired)

State Committee, Section, Task Force, or Workgroup	Dates Served
Nominating Committee, Chair – <b>1 Year</b>	9/1/02-8/31/03
Awards Committee, Chair – <b>3 Years</b>	9/1/01-8/31/04
Task Force – Restructuring of State Board, Chair – <b>1 Year</b>	1999-2000
District VII, Director – <b>2 Years</b>	1997-1999

What FRPA Committee or Task Force was the nominee an active member of? (list committee and years served)

State Committee, Section, Task Force, or Workgroup	Dates Served
Conference Committee, Member – <b>1 Year</b>	9/1/98-8/31/99
Conference Site Selection Committee, Member – <b>1.5 Years</b>	9/1/96-9/1/97 & 3/1/99-8/1/99
Membership Committee, Member – <b>1 Year</b>	9/1/96-8/31/97
Foundation Board, Trustee – <b>3.9 Years</b>	1/1/06-11/30/06 & 1/22/10-12/31/12

## **Narrative #1 – Joseph R. Abel**

On behalf of so many of Joe Abel's associates and co-workers past and present, we are proud to nominate Joseph R. Abel for the FRPA Lifetime Award for his over 30 years of dedication to the Florida Park and Recreation Association and to the Park and Recreation Industry. Since 1989 Joe has been a VERY active member of FRPA and has served as a part of nearly every committee, task force and board. Joe has essentially lived a lifetime in service to local, state, and national levels within the parks and recreation industry.

Joe started his service even before coming to Florida. He was active in the West Virginia Park Association right out of college and when he moved to Florida in the late 1980's he immediately began his service with FRPA. Joe has served in just about every volunteer role possible, including: leadership role and participation in the FRPA local districts; task force chair of numerous committees serving both as an active member and in leadership roles; served as FRPA President-elect, President and Past President roles; served on the FRPA Foundation Board; serving on the awards and nominating committees; participating in the conference site selection committees, and much more. Joe has been recognized for his contributions to FRPA and the field with numerous awards for his service, and for the agencies that he has led.

Joe has proudly represented FRPA and Florida parks and recreation professionals on the national stage as well. Joe served on the NRPA Executive Committee and NRPA Board of Trustees. Joe has presented at conferences all over the United States and has helped connect so many professionals from coast to coast. Joe also proudly led two different organizations to become CAPRA accredited agencies...both of which have remained accredited in part due to the systems Joe helped put in place. Joe has won countless awards (see attached FRPA record) himself and the agencies he has led. Joe loves to talk more about the awards his team has won because Joe has always been about being a part of a winning team.

Beyond all the accolades and awards (which are many) the impact that Joe Abel has made on so many professionals is what has made his career so impactful. Joe likes to tell how many former colleagues have moved on to higher level positions in their agencies not for recognition for himself but for how proud he was that he was able to help put others in a position to achieve their own success. Joe loves helping people and connecting with young professionals. In the last few years Joe has commented to his co-workers how he loves attending conference and trainings and connecting with younger professionals who are hungry to grow! Joe loves the chance to be around hungry and excited professionals and many

have commented how approachable and willing he is with his time to talk to someone at any stage of their career in parks.

While it may not be a measurable achievement, Joe loves to teach at conferences and views this to serve others. Joe takes a lot of time and effort into his presentations and feels an obligation to give back to others within the profession. Joe is always a crowd favorite and his sessions are ALWAYS full and often have people sitting on the floor or standing for hours just to hear him share his content. Joe takes pride in his presentations and has said in the past that he felt teaching sessions at FRPA, or other state organizations, was another way he could help others. And as Joe's career as a public servant in the parks field has ended in retirement, Joe continues to give back to the profession, continuing his teaching at the FRPA Annual conference.

Joe has made a lifetime of an impact on so many individuals in FRPA and he has helped so many people along the way. While Joe has retired from Seminole County and as a full-time recreation professional, he remains a phone call away for so many people in FRPA and around the United States. Joe is one of a kind and is well deserving to be recognized for his lifetime of achievement and positive impact on the profession.

## Florida Recreation and Park Association, Inc. 2022 Lifetime Award

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE (20 points max)**

List any city, county, state, or national program at which the nominee was a speaker promoting the field of parks and recreation

Program/Event Topic	Year
FRPA Annual Conference Speaker – multiple sessions, topics ranging from agency management, careers in parks & recreation, lessons in leadership, etc.	2003 - 2022
West Virginia Park and Recreation Conference - speaker	1988
Missouri Park and Recreation Conference - speaker	2019
Alabama Park and Recreation Conference - speaker	2013, 2014
West Virginia University- Visiting Committee Member (College of Physical Activity)	Ongoing
Florida Local Government Coalition (FLGC) Consortium	2015

List any published article(s) in newspapers, pamphlets, or periodicals relative to the field of parks and recreation.

Name of Publication	Topic	Year
Leisure Insights- Utah Rec & Park Association	Obstacle or Opportunity Article V	Volume 30, Issue 2

List any research or survey(s) the nominee has published/completed relative to the field of parks and recreation.

Name of Book	Topic	Year

List any books relative to parks and recreation that the nominee has authored or co-authored.

Name of Book	Topic	Year

List any opportunities in which the nominee has served as a consultant relative to the field of recreation, parks or leisure services

Name of Program	Topic	Year
Leadership Seminole	Site Coordinator	Multiple Years

## Florida Recreation and Park Association, Inc. 2022 Lifetime Award

List any outstanding or unusual contributions the nominee has made relative to the field of parks and recreation that cannot be placed in a category above.

<p><b>NRPA</b> leadership and involvement is extensive, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of NRPA Southern Region Network – 2010 - 2011</li> <li>• Chair of NRPA One Vision Task Force – 2010 - 2011</li> <li>• Member of Branch/Regions/Sections Task Force - 2010</li> <li>• Member of the Board of Trustees – 2003 – 2006; 2006 – 2009</li> <li>• Member of Executive Committee of Board of Trustees – 2004 - 2005</li> <li>• Chair of Council of Affiliate Presidents – 2002 - 2003</li> <li>• Member of Council of Affiliate Presidents - 1999 - 2003</li> <li>• NRPA Southern Region Representative &amp; Chair - 2000 – 2006</li> <li>• Member of NRPA Affiliate Task Force – 2002 - 2003</li> <li>• Co-Chairperson - Hospitality Committee for 1998 National Convention</li> <li>• Co-Chair – Development/Annual Fund Committee - 2003 – 2005</li> <li>• Member of NRPA Finance Committee – 2004 - 2009</li> <li>• Member of Development/Annual Fund Committee – 2003</li> </ul>
<p>Other <b>FRPA</b> leadership and involvement includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Conference Social Chairperson - 1999</li> <li>• Served on State Conference Site Selection Committee - 1998</li> <li>• Liaison to Dade County Safe Neighborhood Bond Oversight Committee for FRPA District</li> <li>• State Conference Silent Auction Chairperson - 1996</li> <li>• District VII Membership Chairperson</li> <li>• Jack Woody Memorial Outstanding Service Award 1995 - 1996</li> <li>• Mini-Conference Exhibitor Chairperson - 1996</li> <li>• Broward Sports Festival Steering Committee - Media Coordinator</li> <li>• Broward Sports Festival Event Director</li> </ul>
<p>As a member of the <b>West Virginia</b> Recreation and Park Association from 1986 – 1989:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Co-Chair - Fund Raising Committee</li> <li>• State C.E.U. Chair</li> <li>• State Co-Chair - Hershey Track and Field Program</li> </ul>
<p>As an agency Director, led two separate leadership teams through National Accreditation and repeated Re-accreditations for two different agencies - a city agency (Coral Gables) and a county agency (Seminole County). Both of which were among the first 100 agencies in the nation to achieve this accomplishment.</p>
<p>Led the initiative to establish the PARC'S Foundation, the first 501(c)3 in Seminole County dedicated to fund-raising and community philanthropy in support of parks &amp; recreation programs and facilities.</p>
<p>Leadership and skills as a parks &amp; recreation agency Director led to promotions into executive management roles in government. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Served as Interim Assistant City Manager, City of Coral Gables, 3/02 – 10/02</li> <li>• Served as Deputy County Manager, Seminole County, 3/19-11/21</li> <li>• Served as Interim County Manager, Seminole County, 11/21 – 6/22</li> </ul>

## **Narrative #2 – Joseph R. Abel - Community Service**

As Joe's career shifted from Leisure Services Director to Deputy County Manager and Interim County Manager, Joe's involvement in the community has remained a constant for his total 15 years in Central Florida. Paired with his love for his alma mater – West Virginia University – Joe has served as President of the Central Florida WVU Alumni Chapter over the last 10 years, with his participation going back to 2007.

He and his wife Kim Abel host gatherings at local businesses for almost every WVU football game and basketball game each season and loves connecting residents and alumni from the area who share the same love and passion for WVU. This includes special events for those opportunities when a WVU team is playing in the Central Florida region. Apart from the logistics of the actual gatherings themselves, an enormous amount of work is done planning the weekly events, forging relationships with local alumni throughout the community and growing the organization through business and social partnerships.

Joe's commitment as President of the Alumni Chapter requires an annual trip to WVU to coordinate and collaborate with other chapters from around the Country and with the University Administration. This commitment brings with it a focus – and accountability - on raising funds for athletic and academic student scholarships. Joe's commitment includes the founding of a new WVU Academic Scholarship Fund. This fund awards a Central Florida student each year with a \$1,000 scholarship. To date under Joe's leadership, the fund has raised over \$25,000 in scholarship funding. One recipient for the last two years has been a student from our local Seminole High School.

In addition to the scholarship fund, the Association under Joe's leadership has created a partnership with the Lake Mary High School Food Pantry and Seminole County Animal Services. Over the last five years, the Association has spearheaded food drives and pet drives in the local community. And as a part of this additional commitment to the community, donations are collected at each fall game watch then a week before Thanksgiving, the funds are donated to the Food Pantry.

Joe's commitment and involvement in his local community is rivaled only by his commitment to the profession and association. And the results speak for themselves!

Additionally, Joe is an easy target for other charity events outside his work with the alumni association as he is often playing or volunteering with local charity golf outings or events such as Sports for the Kids or Relay for Life.

—○ JOSEPH R. ABEL ○—  
COUNTY MANAGER / CEO

**CONTACT**

 407-920-4760  
 jabel12@cfl.rr.com  
 2215 Earleaf Court  
 Longwood, FL 32779

**PROFILE**

Efficiency-driven, servant, and inspirational leader skilled at leading departments and agencies; improving transparency in government; and building positive relationships with government agencies, community organizations, and members of the public. Exceptional planning, program management, and team development skills gained during 35-year career supporting county and cities ranging in populations from 12,000 to more than 475,000 residents.

**SKILLS**

- ADMINISTRATION
- PROJECT COORDINATION
- STRATEGIC PLANNING
- BUDGET PREPARATION
- HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
- PUBLIC SPEAKING
- RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- CRITICAL THINKING
- PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
- LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Seminole County, Florida**

Interim County Manager	11/2021 - Present
Deputy County Manager	03/2019 - 11/2021
Director of Leisure Services	06/2007 - 02/2019
<i>Included Parks &amp; Recreation, Library Services, Extension Services, Tourism/CVB, Greenways &amp; Natural Lands</i>	

**City of Coral Gables, Florida**

Parks and Recreation Director	02/1998 - 06/2007
Interim Assistant City Manager	03/2002 - 10/2002

**Village of Miami Shores, Florida**

Assistant Director of Recreation	09/1995 - 02/1998
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**City of Wilton Manors, Florida**

Athletic Supervisor	09/1989 - 09/1995
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**City of Charleston, West Virginia**

Recreation Coordinator	02/1988 - 09/1989
Assistant Community Center Manager	07/1987 - 02/1988
Athletic Director	12/1986 - 07/1987

**EDUCATION**

West Virginia University  
 May 1985  
 Bachelor of Science



—○ JOSEPH R. ABEL ○—  
COUNTY MANAGER / CEO

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

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Florida Recreation & Park Association

National Recreation & Park Association

International City/County Managers Association

Florida Association of County Managers

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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President of the Central Florida West Virginia University Alumni Chapter – building and establishing student athletic and academic scholarships totaling approximately \$90,000.

Leadership Seminole graduate and session coordination member.

Served as United Way Executive Leadership Campaign Coordinator for City of Coral Gables.

**NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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Led a team through the successful completion of a \$38M amateur tournament-level sports complex development and land acquisition project.

Led a team through the successful completion of a Florida Communities Land Trust/Florida Department of Environmental Protection land exchange that includes the redevelopment of a defunct golf course. First exchange of this kind in the program's existence.

Negotiated facility utilization contracts with the Professional Orlando City Lions and Pride Soccer Clubs for the use of County facilities that netted four additional soccer fields and renovation of existing training facility.

Led two separate leadership teams through National Accreditation and repeated Re-accreditations for two different agencies – both of which were among the first 100 agencies in the nation to achieve this accomplishment.

Spearheaded park development and renovation projects, resulting in enhanced recreation opportunities and generating economic impacts of over \$40M annually.

Certified Parks & Recreation Professional for over 32 years.

Served in leadership roles at local, state, and national levels for the Florida and National Recreation & Park Associations, including serving as President of the Florida Association, served as President of the Council of Affiliate Presidents as well as serving on the Board of Directors, and Executive Board of the National Association.

Provide outstanding and award-winning programs, services, and leadership in both city and county government agencies for over 35 years.

Accomplished Speaker and Trainer at local, state, and national conferences and agencies.

—○ JOSEPH R. ABEL ○—  
COUNTY MANAGER / CEO

## PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Gained National Agency Accreditation for Seminole County Leisure Services – 2009 - 2014  
Gained National Agency Accreditation for City of Coral Gables Parks and Recreation – 2001 - 2006  
Certified Parks and Recreation Professional since 1993

Member of the National Recreation and Park Association 1992 - Present  
Chair of NRPA Southern Region Network – 2010 - 2011  
Chair of NRPA One Vision Task Force – 2010 - 2011  
Member of Branch/Regions/Sections Task Force - 2010  
Member of the Board of Trustees – 2003 – 2006; 2006 – 2009  
Member of Executive Committee of Board of Trustees – 2004 - 2005  
Chair of Council of Affiliate Presidents – 2002 - 2003  
Member of Council of Affiliate Presidents - 1999 - 2003  
NRPA Southern Region Representative & Chair - 2000 – 2006  
Member of NRPA Affiliate Task Force – 2002 - 2003  
Co-Chairperson - Hospitality Committee for 1998 National Convention  
Co-Chair – Development/Annual Fund Committee - 2003 – 2005  
Member of NRPA Finance Committee – 2004 - 2009  
Member of Development/Annual Fund Committee – 2003 – 2009

Member of the Florida Recreation and Park Association 1989 - Present  
FRPA Achievement Award Recipient – 2011  
Immediate Past President of Association - 2001 - 2003  
President of Association - 2000 - 2001  
Chaired Task Force to examine Restructuring of State Association Board - 1999 - 2000  
President Elect of Association - 1999 - 2000  
State Conference Social Chairperson - 1999  
District VII Director – 1997 - 1999  
Served on State Conference Site Selection Committee - 1998  
Liaison to Dade County Safe Neighborhood Bond Oversight Committee for FRPA District  
State Conference Silent Auction Chairperson - 1996  
District VII Membership Chairperson  
Jack Woody Memorial Outstanding Service Award 1995 - 1996  
Mini-Conference Exhibitor Chairperson - 1996  
Broward Sports Festival Steering Committee - Media Coordinator  
Broward Sports Festival Event Director

Member of the West Virginia Recreation and Park Association 1986 - 1989  
State CO-Chairperson - Fund Raising Committee  
State C.E.U. Chairperson  
State CO-Chairperson - Hershey Track and Field Program