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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**West University Place Parks & Recreation Honored with Prestigious Awards and Welcomes Leadership Transition**

WEST UNIVERSITY PLACE, TX – On Thursday, December 12, the West University Place Parks and Recreation Department was honored with two awards from the Texas Recreation and Parks Society (TRAPS) East Region, coinciding with an exciting leadership transition as a new team member steps into a key role for the department.

The Friends of West University Parks Fund (Friends) were honored with the Advocate of the Year award in recognition of their ongoing support for the Parks & Recreation department. Since its inception, Friends has raised over 9 million dollars through their events and another 9 million dollars in in-kind donations. This year the organization funded a \$1 million project to renovate the city's most used space, Wier Park.

Toby Brooks, Senior Services Manager, was recognized with the Recreation Professional of the Year award. Driven by a mission to enhance the quality of life for West University Place seniors, Toby has focused on providing services and activities that foster lifelong learning, social engagement, and overall well-being - a goal she and her team have certainly achieved. Her leadership has played a critical role in developing the robust and successful programs available to residents 50 and over.

Toby's recognition comes at the opportune moment as after 20 years with the City of West University Place and 30 years in the parks and recreation industry, she will be retiring at the end of January 2025. The city is grateful for her contributions and the profound effect she has had on the Senior Services division.

Starting January 2, 2025, the city will welcome Toby's successor, Michelle Blunt as the new Senior Services Manager. Michelle comes to West U with 13 years from the City of Pasadena, working in adaptive recreation and most recently as Marketing Manager. While Michelle brings extensive experience working with senior populations, the city is equally thrilled about her marketing skills, a key area for improvement identified by the Senior Services Board and through citizen surveys.

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