



OUTSTANDING PARTNER

Provident Bank

Craig Blunden

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Provident Bank

Provident Bank may be a regional bank, but for Craig Blunden, chairman and CEO, the bank's importance is measured by its community investments not just its monetary assets.

"I am sure our community involvement plays a huge role in our success as a financial institution," Blunden said. "No doubt about it. I

hear from people on the street every day, not only about the service but for our many community donations and our staff's involvement in local organizations."

The bank has 15 retail banking operations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties and 17 mortgage offices in cities from San Diego to San Francisco. Provident, which in 2016 will celebrate 60 years in the Inland Empire, provides financial services to consumers and small and mid-sized businesses.

RCCD Chancellor Michael Burke and the Riverside Community College District Foundation Board selected Provident Bank as the 2015 Outstanding Partner.

Blunden credits Provident's decision to go public as the catalyst that allowed the bank to support the region's growing needs. The bank used a portion of the proceeds from its public offering to establish a non-profit entity. Blunden sought out advice from his board of directors, a few with strong ties to the District, on how the bank's success and proceeds could help the region.

He credited bank board members Debbi Guthrie and Judy Carpenter, and bank vice president Jamil Dada, all of whom are past presidents of the RCCD Foundation, for opening his eyes to what the District has to offer.

"The more you understand RCCD, the more you want to be involved," Blunden said. "We need to focus on institutions that really add value to the needs of the region."

Blunden's father, Gordon, a WWII pilot and navigator who put himself through UCLA by selling magazine subscriptions, brought his family to Riverside in 1955. He founded the bank, which employs 550 individuals today, in 1956.

"My father was a wonderful role model for me in watching how he started and then ran this institution," Blunden said.

A member of the last graduating class from "old" Riverside Poly, when the campus was adjacent to Riverside City College, Blunden earned a degree from UC Riverside's business school. After graduating, he left California to explore a different line of business. Two years later, he was hired as a management trainee

at a financial institution in Arizona, which eventually led him to return to Riverside and follow in his father's footsteps.

"I really loved the business," Blunden said. "It has been a wonderful career and I've enjoyed it immensely."

Under his leadership, Provident Bank was one of the first donors to the Riverside Aquatics Complex at RCC, a state-of-the-art facility that put the city on the map when it comes to regional, state and national aquatic competitions. The bank also supports the RCC Tiger Backers golf tournament, which benefits athletics, RCCD workforce initiatives, and Starting Blocks, a summer program that teaches at-risk youth swimming and water safety.

"Riverside to me is so different than other cities in Southern California," Blunden said. "It is a town where people are involved, deeply involved in making sure the city is a success."

