

Deborah “Rusty” Wertz  
Submission for DBWC BoD candidacy  
June 20, 2026

~ Biography & Statement of Purpose ~

Born in Long Beach, CA, the much-loved first child of two loving and supportive parents, I received a world-class education beginning with the California public school system and through to a hard-earned degree from Mount St. Mary's University in Los Angeles at the age of 50. Coming out in 1968 naturally presented some challenges but I survived and thrived.

My early work includes that of a drive-in theater cashier, school bus driver, dishwasher in a bowling alley, and a truck driver. I started work as an order desk clerk in a pipe, valve, and fitting business in 1974 and spent much of the following 45 years in the steel industry.

In the '80's, during the early days of the AIDS crisis, I took a 10-year detour from manufacturing and became involved in ministry with Metropolitan Community Church. I lost many dear friends and presided at more funerals than weddings in those days. I helped start a new congregation in Whittier, CA then became an assistant pastor at MCC in Minneapolis. I returned to the steel business in 1990 and went on to found a pipe fabrication company in LA supplying fabricated materials for both irrigation and water and wastewater treatment facilities. I developed deep levels of understanding and experience negotiating ongoing construction projects, managing claims and legal settlements with mechanical contractors, suppliers, and municipalities. I served two terms on the Board of Directors for the NAPF, a national trade association. I later sold this business and retired. During this time I also served a term as President of my condominium association board.

I am a proud life-long learner and seek to remain open to creative ideas and new perspectives. I freely admit to not knowing everything about everything and will remain open to all perspectives.

I strongly believe in the aggregate wisdom of community and pledge to be a conduit of thoughtful reason. I have had mentors along the way - both personally and professionally - that have allowed me to develop an analytical, creative, and curious mind which is an essential trait in dealing with complex problems.

I have chosen to throw my hat in the ring at this time because I believe that my specific skills and experiences can be of significant value as we navigate through our current septic issue.

Leadership during difficult times requires showing up with “clarity, presence, and purpose”. Effective leaders encourage diverse perspectives and support frequent communications with members that can mitigate misinformation and uncertainty. Our current board has modeled these behaviors and I pledge to continue and encourage these practices.

In summary, I believe that my background and skillset would be an asset to our beloved community at this particular time and I humbly ask for your support.