



## H.R. Phillips

September 14, 1926 - June 9, 2015

### BIOGRAPHY OF H.R. PHILLIPS

H.R. was born September 14, 1926, near Oswego, Kansas, to Marchie and Homer Phillips, Sr. H.R. was the 5th child, the 3rd boy in a family of 7 boys and 3 girls. He was raised on a farm and attended rural grade school until the 6th grade. His family then moved to the edge of Oswego, Kansas, where he completed the 8th grade and one year of high school. H.R. completed high school at Labette County Community High School, where he majored in auto mechanics. After high school in 1945, he entered the Air Force, attending cadet pre-flight school at Kessler AFB, Biloxi, Mississippi. H.R. chose to drop flight school after V E and V J Day and stayed in the regular Air Force. He was assigned to the 9th Air Force as a mechanic at Wiesbaden, Germany, the Air Force headquarters. H.R. chose not to extend the Air Force tour to return home and enter college.

He was the first of his family to receive his college degree. H.R. served as college class president his sophomore year and lettered in three sports. As a sophomore he was picked as an all Kansas State Junior College guard in basketball (1948-49 season).

H.R.'s first job after graduation in June 1951 was Recreation Director for

National Gypsum Company plant in Parsons, Kansas. He provided sports and recreation programs for 5,000 employees and played on the Gypsum AAU basketball team with players from several colleges including CU, Kansas State, Pittsburgh State, including player Dean Smith from KU & North Carolina.

In March 1955, H.R. married Neva Jean Lamb. They moved to Logan County, Sterling, Colorado, where he was the County Recreation Director. In 1962 the family moved to Ft. Collins, Colorado, as the first Director of Recreation and in 1966 became the city's first Parks & Recreation Director. He retired in 1988 after twenty-six years in Ft. Collins.

During H.R.'s tenure with the city, it was the beginning of heavy growth and after hiring a group of professional people there was a push to develop new facilities and new programs which consisted of new parks, sports fields, including a swimming pool, a recreation center and other facilities. H.R. worked hard with friend, Mike DiTullio, Assistant City Manager, getting a parkland fund ordinance passed that still is in effect today, bringing in funds to purchase and develop new parks. He was a strong supporter of developing the city's trail and open space program during the 70's and 80's and served on a support group pushing for the Colorado Lottery. Fort Collins received the National Gold Medal award in 1986 for outstanding Parks & Recreation for cities under 100,000 people. When H.R. took over the Parks & Recreation Dept. there were only four parks and one 9 hole golf course in Fort Collins. . When he retired in 1988 there were over thirty parks developed, two new 18 hole golf courses, plus land purchased for open space and other undeveloped parks.

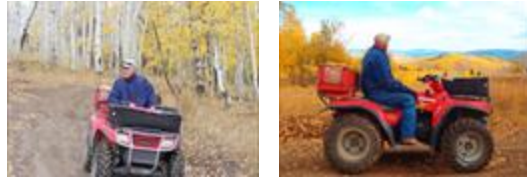
There are many more areas of accomplishment contributed to H.R.'s work, however, most citizens of the 60's, 70's & 80's know well of his works and the citizens of Ft. Collins today are benefiting from these projects.

H.R. enjoyed lots of sports besides football, basketball and track. He enjoyed snow skiing, canoeing, white water rafting, horse pack trips, camping and all kinds of fishing and hunting. He especially enjoyed anything to do with the mountains. As he grew older he took up horseshoe pitching, he learned from his friend Bob Olsheski. He loved to play racquetball, tennis and golf, but gave up the more physical activities (baseball, softball, basketball) as he grew older. H.R. kept very active with golf, horseshoes, fishing and enjoyed living in the country.

# Tribute Wall

KP

“ 2 files added to the album *New Album Name*



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**Kelly Phillips** - September 07, 2015 at 10:24 PM

MA

“ We wish to say Thank You to your loved one for his service to our great country. Our sympathies are with your family.

*FoCo Marine Corps League Auxiliary #785*

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**Marine Corps League Auxiliary** - June 15, 2015 at 05:11 PM

SW

“ My parents talk about H.R. all the time--what a good friend he was to them when they lived in FC, and even after we moved. I was a kid when we lived there, and I remember his horses and all the elk hunting trips he and my dad would go on. Love to all the Phillips!

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**Susan Wood** - June 14, 2015 at 02:48 PM

PK

“ My sincere condolences for the family. I have many fond memories of H.R. and I'm happy he had a long and happy life.

*Pat Kelly*

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**Patrick Kelly** - June 14, 2015 at 01:29 PM

JA

*H.R. was a terrific builder of the community of Fort Collins. Most don't remember that there were no parks and no recreation programs when H.R. came to town. He started the program and lived to see national Gold Medal awards for his parks and thousands participating in the recreation programs. The quality of life that is so high in Fort Collins is in great part due to his lifelong efforts. He and Neva were good friends to us and to so many more. He will be missed.*

*John Arnold*

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**John Arnold** - June 15, 2015 at 09:58 AM

MM

*I first met HR soon after I began working for the City in 1971, and he NEVER changed -- always with a smile and acting like he was glad to see you. That was still true last time I saw him, a few years ago, in a grocery store. A quick hug/greeting and we were each on our way. A good guy, wonderful legacy with Parks & Recreation, and more. Thank God for memories -- you must have a ton. . . Condolences to the family,*

*Mollie Mercer,*

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**Mollie Mercer** - June 16, 2015 at 12:56 PM

RG

*We've known HR forever, way back in the days, often thought of him and Neva. HR was such a pleasant person and the smile in this photo is how we always remember him. He will be missed by so many. RIP HR*

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**Ron/Ida Gonzales** - June 20, 2015 at 08:46 AM

EM

*Though I didn't know H. R. personally, I would like to offer my sympathy to the family. I remember his wife, Neva and the many pleasant times we shared together when she worked at Bob's Pharmacy and our office was next door. Over the years I lost track so would like to take this opportunity to let her know my thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.*

*Emma Miller  
emm92125@aol.com  
223-6458*

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**Emma Miller** - June 20, 2015 at 07:57 PM