



Notes Regarding the History of the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado
Written January 5, 2008 by Bob Everitt, Founding Trustee

In 1970, Morrie Nelson, representing the Chamber of Commerce, and Karl Carson, the Mayor of Fort Collins, got together and organized a citizen planning group that was formed to come up with a long-range comprehensive plan called "Plan Development for Quality."

From that early committee an organization called DT² was started. That was organized in 1971. As I recall, there were a number of task forces that were organized to come up with different ideas and monies that might be needed for the development of Fort Collins so that it would enhance the quality of life of the community. Included in that organization were: a representative from the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor of Fort Collins, representatives for the arts, a facilities task force, a task force for representatives from the university, and representatives for the library, the hospital district, the newspaper, the school district, the legal profession, low-income housing, the symphony, etc. The chairman of the auditorium work group, which was the group to look into building a performing arts center, was Lilla Morgan and Frank Johnson. They were the co-chairs.

In 1973, DT² came up with its recommendations for all the projects that they felt were needed and should be voted on by the people of Fort Collins. The City Council agreed with their recommendations and put it to a vote in 1973. The recommendation was for a one-cent sales tax that would run for a seven-year period to pay for all the recommendations. The recommendations included a new library, a new performing arts center (The Lincoln Center), parks, an indoor swimming pool, the Poudre Walkway Trails, and city offices. There were over 400 people who participated in the DT² organization.

Lilla Morgan (CSU's Retired President Bill Morgan's wife) and Frank Johnson were the co-chairs in raising the monies that were needed in addition to the monies that were approved by the voters of Fort Collins for the Lincoln Center.

As I recall, there was something in the order of \$3 million that was designated for the remodeling of Lincoln Junior High School into a performing arts center and a new library and some money for the museum. I think the amount voted on by the voters for the Lincoln Center alone was approximately \$2 million and that was to be used only if a certain amount of money could be raised from the Fort Collins citizens to go along with the money that was voted on in the election. I don't recall the amount that had to be raised from the community.

It was determined that there needed to be some kind of organization that could hold the money until all of the citizens' money was raised for the Lincoln Center, and it was decided that a foundation should be established to hold the money until all of the money was raised from the citizens of Fort Collins that would match the money that was approved by the voters. I am not sure of the exact date when the Foundation was formed, but I would guess that it was late in 1974 or 1975. Representatives on the Foundation included representatives from the School District, the Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Collins Council of Churches, the Poudre Valley

Memorial Hospital, Colorado State University (Ray Chamberlain), the Bar Association, the Larimer county Medical Society, United Way, Fort Collins Park & Recreation Board, First National Bank, United Bank of Fort Collins, and Home Federal Savings & Loan.

The original mission of the Fort Collins Foundation was to merely hold money from the donations that citizens of Fort Collins made towards the building of the Lincoln Center. Discussions were continually held about the viability of continuing the Foundation after the Lincoln Center was built as a means for holding funds for nonprofit organizations that existed or for holding funds for special projects that were short-range funding activities for special projects that were of a nonprofit nature. Later, discussions were held about making the Foundation a more viable organization with an executive director, with the idea that we could administer the collection and disbursement of funds out of the Foundation for nonprofits that wanted the Foundation to hold funds or for new nonprofit organizations that wanted to be formed but did not want to have the administrative staff to hold and disburse the funds and keep track of the funds.

We hired a part-time executive director and it was Kaye Arnold who was the wife of the City Manager at that time. Kaye was a beautiful young lady with a big heart, but all of us on the Foundation Board as well as Kaye had to go through the learning curve of how we might run this foundation. Most of the fund raising activities of the Foundation itself were to raise money for funding the continuing operation of the Foundation, because in those formative years we really did not have very many nonprofits that were inclined to use the Foundation. I can recall on one occasion that we decided to have a fund raiser to raise money to fund the Foundation's operation and we invited a man to come and portray Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Center on stage and he would give the Gettysburg Address and other speeches. We did some advertising that I recall being out on street corners literally begging people to buy tickets to the event so that we could have the money to continue the funding of the Foundation.

John Arnold later took a job in another community as a City Manager and at that time Kaye Arnold left her position as Executive Director of the Foundation and Diane Hogerty was hired. At that time, the Foundation became more aggressive in soliciting nonprofits and individuals explaining how we could hold monies for nonprofit organizations and individuals who wanted to make donations to nonprofits and hold those monies in trust of them and disburse those monies as they saw fit.

Obviously, the reputation of the Foundation has grown immensely through the years and is operating in a fashion never dreamed of in those formative years of the Foundation. I believe that the Fort Collins and Northern Colorado community can be thankful for the service of many good people who have served on the Community Foundation Board the last 35 years as well as the good work that all of the staff and administrative people that have worked for the Foundation have given to the Northern Colorado community.