

Why Did I Get Involved With Colorado Springs Centennial Celebrations and Start the Revitalization of Old Colorado City as an Historic Project?

In 1975, three years after I had retired from 27 years of military service, I was disturbed by the announcement printed in the Colorado Springs Gazette by Mayor Andy Marshal that, since the Council could not find anyone willing to step up and volunteer to organize a Colorado Centennial/US Bicentennial celebration for 1976 so the City might have to just 'pass' on these historic landmarks. Three prominent local citizens had already made feeble attempts to get things started, but resigned. I had already overheard Bill Smart, big developer tell a roomful of local businesspersons say "We can't afford a Centennial Celebration. The city is not in good shape"

That made me mad. So I visited the Mayor in his office behind closed doors. I said "No way will I let Colorado Springs, the 2d largest city in Colorado and my home town ignore the 200th Birthday of the Nation and the 100th Birthday of the State of

Colorado I added "I can organize both celebrations with one hand tied behind my back, better than all your city VIPs put together. The only thing that the new people and the old timers have in common are the "Good Old Days that Never Were." I'll volunteer to them both for nothing" And I left. Took 3 minutes.

Andy, who pretty much knew I had been the ass-kicking Chief of Staff of Fort Carson, where we had pioneered what it took to make an All Volunteer Army - requiring a large component of coordination and cooperation with State, County, and City governments - and that I was native -sort of - having grown up on Wood Avenue - where he lived. He knew I was related to recently deceased business-successful and prominent civic leader Arleen Hughes.

So he took my offer to the City Council, which breathed a sigh of relief and voted to appoint me . But in typical parsimonious fashion - the city begging poverty after the 1973 first nationwide Gas Shortage had reduced Tourism substantially - authorized me a paltry \$6,000 which they figured I would use to just hire a parttime secretary-assistant.

Thats what kicked it all off. Not only the year long 1976 twin Celebrations held but it spearheaded a radically new approach to revitalizing the entire run down Westside and its Colorado Avenue commercial district, which is still (2015) going on. (today called "Old Colorado City" which is also now a National Historic District. The first in Colorado Springs.)

These undertakings are detailed in the Other Careers section of this Legacy.net Web Site.

But why did I do it? What motivated me? Especially since I was hardly - on a retired Colonel's pay and with no large estate - in the position to just throw around my personal savings.

On Reflection - I think it stemmed from several characteristics I have always possessed - for better and for worse - most of my life.

1. I have always had a Celtic imagination - I can think up new or better ways to do things.
2. The combination of my instilled West Point values makes me think, whenever Government is involved, especially at public expense, that there should be a

payoff of the PUBLIC, and not just PRIVATE interests.

3. In the 4 years after my formal Army Retirement in 1973 as I became knowledgeable in how both government and local business worked I was increasingly unimpressed with BOTH local business AND local elected governments. Even though most local governments - City and County - were filled with Conservative Republican-oriented officials I saw almost NO imagination at work. It was as if, after Colorado Springs became a beneficiary of the large Defense Department expenditures in the County - the AFA, Fort Carson, and Norad - the business 'community' no longer knew how to build wealth in the County, or make up for setbacks - like the 1973 national gas shortages that would impact at least Tourism.

4. I saw that the Centennial/Bicentennial year COULD become an opportunity for new initiatives. A Beginning, not End.

5. I always had an interest in tradition and history, from the days I lived in the historic "Church Castle" in Denver as a teen, which showed me the commercial value of 1890's Architecture, even in

run down parts of Denver. Colorado Springs had destroyed its downtown history through ham-handed Urban Renewal. Yet there was still a corner - the West Side - of Colorado Springs which had the remnants of our Frontier and Gold Rush Past.

6. I brought into Retirement a whole series of new perspectives on national trends that my 4 years 'Inventing' a new Volunteer Army at Carson brought me. It was NOT too much to say that my 'Field Manuals' as Chief of Staff for attracting and undertaking changes in the 'new' soldiers we would be absorbing, included Tofflers "Future Shock", "Neither Marx Nor Jesus", "The Medium is the Message", "The Greening of America" and "Nasbits "Megatrends" A vision of a rapidly changing Future, not just a celebration of a local Past.

7. After 27 years Military Service with the last 4 years, as a senior officer, managing a large post-division staff reinventing the Army via Fort Carson, I knew how to get things done - both inside the Army, and I was confident I could apply also to outside Civilian Organizations.