

# Warheim Park Dedication Speech

by Hal Warheim

**OCTOBER 2, 2004**

“Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue. And the dreams that we dared to dream really do come true.”

Today, that blue-skied land over the rainbow is Louisville, KY, a city of many wonderful parks. And, today, the dream of this new neighborhood park which we have dared to dream for such a long time has at last come true.

As some of you know, there have been times during the past ten years when it seemed that we were dreaming an impossible dream and struggling against unbeatable foes. But, with patience and persistence, what was once a dangerous, impenetrable wasteland and dumping ground has been redeemed as this elegant and useful public place.

At the entrance to the park stands a huge rock resembling the Matterhorn, a lofty alpine peak, which symbolizes the long, steep, hard climb which we have had to make to the top of this project. And, now that we have reached the summit, what a magnificent view! And what a worthwhile achievement!

I believe that to create something which enhances the enjoyment and welfare of our neighbors is one of life's greatest privileges and pleasures. And to be known as a good neighbor is a great honor.

Now, while I have received a lot of recognition as the one who first dreamed the dream of this neighborhood park, I want the world to know that the dream's realization is the achievement of a number of friends and neighbors who dared to share the dream with me and who made very significant and valuable contributions to this project.

I am now going to publicly recognize these individuals and, when I have finished the list, please join me in grateful applause for their indispensable efforts.

First and foremost, thanks to the park's creative and dedicated Board of Directors who participated in innumerable meetings, regularly made tough and wise decisions and carried out heavy responsibilities with skill and enthusiasm: Jocelyn Warren,

Sarah Kuhn More, Jim Watson, Larry Lenahan, Mike More and Angelito Samson.

Two of the most important and best decisions the park's Directors have made were the engagement of award-winning landscape architect, Mike Smiley of Environs, Inc. and Ed Davis' award-winning E-Z Construction Co. who, respectively, designed and built the park. Both of these men and E-Z's foreman, Gerald Bobbitt were highly professional in their work, extraordinarily helpful in giving us what we wanted for the park, and were always a pleasure to work with. We expect that when the park is complete and in full bloom, their work here will be honored with yet another award.

Next, praise is deserved by the park's fundraising team who expertly led the campaign to invite individuals, businesses and foundations to share ownership in the park by making financial contributions to its creation and perpetration: Sally McMahon, Bryan Warren and Amy Miller.

The elegant brochure, the thistle logo and other artistic materials which present the park to the public are the brilliant creations of Martin Hofmann. Martin has also created and supplies the park's website where folks can see photos of the park's evolution from a wilderness to this oasis of peace and beauty.

Years ago, when I first approached the Belknap Neighborhood Association with my plan for this park, I'm sure that some members suspected me of lunacy. But Don Osborn and the B.N.A. Board of Directors encouraged me, supported the project when it was resisted, and included it in their Neighborhood Plan which was adopted by the City.

Also, during a period when the project seemed doomed, Alderman Bill Allison steadfastly guided it through a wilderness of bureaucratic politics and generated the legislation which authorized this property to become a city park.

The path to the park's creation had many legal obstacles to surmount and, wisely leading us over the hurdles and through the hoops were our indispensable Stites and Harbison attorneys, Monica Henderson and Bob Griffith.



*Continued on next page.*

  
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Also indispensable was the expert counsel about fundraising and fund management which we received from the start of the project to the present from our good friends Dennis Riggs, Kathy Steward and James Hill of the Community Foundation of Louisville.

Thanks to our new Metro Parks Director, Mike Heitz, who has been very supportive of this project and who has donated most of the new trees and shrubs from Metro Park's stock which are being carefully and artfully planted here by Phil Shafer and his crew of Integrity Landscape and Design.

We are grateful also to our Metro District Councilman, Tom Owen, for his willingness to MC this event, for his support of the project, and for granting the park \$2,000.00 from his Metro Districts Neighborhood Development Fund.

And while I am disinclined to believe in angels, I believe one appeared at the park's Groundbreaking about a year ago in the person of Dan Brightwell. Dan operates a professional lawn care service and he volunteered his company's service to help

maintain the park's green spaces. This man has wings and a halo as far as I'm concerned.

There are other dreamers who have given generously of their time and talent to the park as they were needed in various ways: Laura Sexton, Joyce Straight, Ted Zaehring and Chris Maguire. And if I've missed mentioning anyone, please check it off to dementia, not to ingratitude.

So, there are the people most responsible for the creation of this park and the daring dreamers to whom we can all be grateful for the good work they have done. Bravo!

And now, on behalf of all those who have helped to birth this dream, we dedicate this park to the pleasures of present and future generations who will come here to rest, to play, to enjoy nature, and to mingle with friends and neighbors.

Welcome to Warheim Park!

Remarks by Hal Warheim

