



## Strong Park History

One a native Elk Grovian, and the other a self-proclaimed Courtland "river rat," Jerry and Jeanne Strong have worked together to enhance the quality of life for Elk Grove residents for more than 40 years. Jerry's ancestors settled in the south county area in 1856 a few miles south of Franklin. Flooding prompted them to relocate further North to Bruceville. For the last 20 years, the Strongs have resided in their ranch house on Bond Road.

Jerry and Jeanne met on a blind date and were married in 1958. They settled in Elk Grove and started a family. The Strongs raised 5 children - daughter Jeralynn, and sons Jeff, Jed, Jerret, and Jey. Their family has grown even larger over the last few years to include 5 grandchildren and, more recently, the birth of their first great grandchild. Currently, 5 generations of Strong family members reside in the Elk Grove area. Jerry and Jeanne credit having active children as a factor spurring their involvement in several community organizations. Following the interests of their kids, they got involved in activities at Pleasant Grove School, 4 H, and FFA. Where and when they saw a need in these organizations, the 2 mobilized the community to raise funds for things like an FFA trailer to transport the children's animals to annual competitions at the Cow Palace and no cost dental care for students whose families could not otherwise afford it.

As their children grew older, the 2 branched out to assist other organizations. They became involved with Project RIDE, a program that provides equine therapy to handicapped children. Jeanne volunteered to work with children and horses and Jerry helped with a variety of "behind the scenes" projects at the facility. In 1989, the 2 spearheaded efforts to develop an enclosed riding arena that would allow students year-round use of the facility. The refurbished arena opened in January 1995 funded solely by private donations and miscellaneous fundraising efforts. Along the way, the 2 started their own catering business and continued to contribute their time and talents to other groups. Jeanne served as the President of the Elk Grove Branch of the American Cancer Society for 2 years. Additionally, Jerry served as a volunteer fireman for 22 years and for the past 14 years has helped to prepare and serve meals every Thanksgiving and Christmas to the hungry that visit Sacramento's Loaves and Fishes facility.

The Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce recognized Jerry and Jeanne for their service to the community when they were both named 1991's Citizen of the Year.

*The information within this document was created at the time of park dedication and may not be current.*