



Zimbelman Park History

Arnie and Iris Zimbelman were married September 3, 1950, and are the proud parents of 3 daughters: Deborah, Terrie, and Sherrie. In June of 1956, the Zimbelmans moved to Elk Grove, to allow Arnie to take a teaching position at Elk Grove High School. While there, Arnie was one of 15 teachers nationwide to receive a summer fellowship from Stanford University to study Recent Interpretations in American History. In 1969, he left to take a position with the Los Rios Community College District. After transferring from Sacramento City College, he taught at the new Cosumnes River College until his retirement in 1992. During Arnie's employment with the Los Rios community College District he served as the Cosumnes River College Faculty Senate President, Los Rios District Senate Council President, as a member of the Education Advisory Committee for Senator John Garamendi, a member of the CICA Committee on Missions and Goals for Community Colleges, was a guest lecturer at Santa Clara University, an instructor of the Cosumnes River College Honors Program, and was one of 3 instructors chosen for the first Los Rios London Semester Program in Fall of 1988.

Iris, busy mother of 3, was very involved in her community and her children's education, serving as President of the Elk Grove Elementary School Parents Club. Her commitment and contributions to the Elk Grove schools earned her an Outstanding Service Award in 1983. Iris was named Soroptimist's "Woman of Distinction" and Elk Grove Citizen of the Year in 1989. Cosumnes River College honored her as their Woman in History in 1990, and the Sacramento Y.W.C.A. selected her as their Outstanding Woman in Arts and Humanities that same year.

The Zimbelmans are very fond of traveling and classical music. While on their third trip to Europe, they were fascinated with the beauty and history of the city of Vienna. Iris was very impressed by the fact that many small towns in Europe had events for people to take part in. It was evident to Iris that music and togetherness were very important to the people of these towns. She began to search for a way to bring that special feeling to life in her home town of Elk Grove. In 1985 the process of creating a community event began. This event would eventually be known as the Strauss Festival. After the successful recruitment of a Strauss Festival committee, a grant proposal was submitted and funding was sought to build a permanent performing arts center in Elk Grove Park. The project was approved and funding was granted for the construction of the facility in 1986. In July of 1987 the first Strauss Festival, "A Touch of Vienna", took place on the newly completed Strauss Island. For the past 9 years, the Zimbelmans have worked together with the Strauss Festival Board of Directors and an ever increasing number of volunteers to produce, fund, and coordinate the annual Strauss Festival. The first festival consisted of 2 nights with approximately 5,000 people in attendance. The

festival has now grown to include five evening and welcomes nearly 40,000 people annually from all parts of the world to attend this free event.

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