

Merlin B Larson

At the corner of 9600 N and 6000 West sits the Merlin Larson Park. It's the one with the Gazebo and the rose garden. You may have wondered who Merlin Larson was and why we have a park named after him. I want to tell you because I was privileged to know Merlin Larson and you should know what a fine man he was and how much he contributed to the development of Highland.



Merlin was born in 1923 at his parent's home in Highland. His parents were Ludvig Maurice Larson and Vera Marie Featherstone Larson. His father served the Highland community in several capacities. During the 1930 Depression, Ludvig supervised the Federal Emergency Relief Association, a program to help those in need, and distributed food to families in Highland. The Utah County Commission asked him to supervise the P.W.A. (Public Works Administration). The project in Highland was to haul gravel and put it on the muddy roads.

Ludvig was the spokesperson for the community that convinced Utah Power and Light Co. to bring electricity to Highland. He was a member of the first committee that organized the Highland Culinary Water Company.

Merlin learned how to work hard growing up in Highland. The majority of the families were farmers and each child had responsibilities. He also learned from his father the importance of serving others in the community.



He was called to be Bishop of the Highland Ward in 1953 and served in that position for 13 1/2 years. In 1970, he was appointed to serve on the Utah County Planning Commission, and did so until 1973, when he was called as Stake President of the Alpine Stake, which included wards from Alpine as well as Highland. In 1980, the Alpine Stake was divided and Merlin was sustained as President of the new Highland Stake. He was

released in 1983, having served ten years as Stake President.

He served as a member of the Highland City Planning Commission for 12 years. He supervised the flood control program for Highland, which resulted in the construction of a flood control basin at the mouth of American Fork Canyon.

Merlin served as a member of the Highland Culinary Water Company from 1984 to 1994 and was president the last four years. In that capacity, he was part of the recommendation that Highland City require land developers to convey an amount of irrigation water to the City before the subdivision plat would be approved. That requirement became part of the development code for Highland. He researched and compiled the total irrigation water information for the City which was then used to develop the Pressurized Irrigation System.

Merlin's father always said he served "Just for the good of the community," Merlin adopted that philosophy. He served whenever he saw a need. He was an important part of the development of the Highland City you now enjoy, and a fine man and friend. Merlin and his wife, Marie, raised their four children on their farm in Highland. He also worked at Geneva Steel for 35 years, retiring in 1986.

That is why we have a Merlin Larson Park in Highland.