

Way We Were

June 29, 2016

The Life and Times of Charlie Woodbury

Mahala Ruddell, Research coordinator

When Charles Woodbury first moved to Park City with his wife and son, he applied for the coaching position at Park City High School. He had rich experience with sports including basketball, football, and boxing as well as a four and a half year professional stint as pitcher for the Salt Lake Bees. But superintendent Carl Winters noticed something else on his resume: a Masters in Education from Utah State University. Winters offered Woodbury a job as principal instead, and Woodbury accepted.

Charlie was born in LaVerkin, Utah and grew up throughout the state. He joined the Marines in 1942, at the height of World War II, and served in the Pacific theater as a mechanic and driver for a heavy machinery division. He returned to Utah after the war, where he met his wife Joan at Branch Agricultural College in Ceder City. He went on to receive his Master's from USU in 1952.

Charlie, Joan, and their infant son moved to Park City in 1956. Both Charlie and Joan were active members of the community. Charlie served on several development committees in addition to his work as principal. The family lived 1057 Woodside Avenue, just across the street from Carl Winters and only a block away from the high school.

During Charlie's tenure, the high school saw several changes. In 1956, the chemistry lab underwent a "badly needed cleaning" and update. Prior to the work, "the chemistry class [had] been unable to conduct experiments because of the lab's condition. This [had] been a handicap to the class because experiments are a vital part of chemistry," noted the *Park Record* in a statement of the obvious.

The following year saw the introduction of driver's education classes for students at the school. As part of an expanding nationwide effort to reduce the number of car accidents, the state legislature added a dollar to the cost of vehicle registration which off-set the cost of training programs hosted in high schools. Carl Winters and Charlie Woodbury were both instrumental in organizing the provision of both an instructor, Raymond Childs, and a car, a Ford model from the Park City branch of Crandall-Walker Motor Company.

Charlie also oversaw \$17,000 in improvements made to the high school building and the purchase of a new school bus. When the old school bus was retired, he bought it, painted it blue, and "took his family on many memorable (and at times hair-raising) adventures." While living in Park City, the Woodburys had two more children. Another son was born in 1958; a daughter was born in 1963.

In 1966, Charlie resigned as principal and the Woodburys moved to Salt Lake City. A petition was circulated and signed by over 85% of the student body and faculty asking him to reconsider his decision, a demonstration of how well-liked he was in the community he served. He worked, fished, and lived a life full of wit and wry humor until passing away in June 2015.



Image ID: 1956.145.3

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Kendall Webb Collection

Caption: Principal Charles Woodbury, pictured here just three months into his tenure, served Park City High school from August 1956 until September 1966.