



COSUMNES COMMUNITY SERVICES  
DISTRICT

PARKS AND RECREATION  
DEPARTMENT

Making Lives Better!

## Van Doren Park History

Van Doren Park is named after Merle B. Van Doren and his son Robert. Merle was born in Minnesota and came to Elk Grove in 1920, 2 years after he married his wife, Hattie. With his father-in-law, Van Doren began a general merchandise store on Elk Grove Boulevard. Merle was a friendly man and active in several community organizations. He served on the Elk Grove Fire District Board of Directors, which was his major contribution to the community. He had 3 children (Wilma, Bob and Ruth) and 10 grandchildren.

Robert attended Elk Grove Elementary and graduated from Elk Grove High School in 1945. He was a Merchant Marine, postal carrier, and insurance man. Robert was involved in the Elk Grove Fireman's Association and was a member of the Elk Grove Fire District Board of Directors (later renamed Elk Grove Community Services District) from 1969 to 1989. Robert is a Charter member of the Elk Grove Rotary Club, where he served as secretary for 7 years, and was involved in Masonic Lodge #173.

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