



Lawson Park History

A commitment to working with handicapped children has been the motivating force behind Gary Lawson's 34 years of teaching with the Elk Grove Unified School District. Mr. Lawson, a fifth generation resident of Woodland, moved to Elk Grove in 1955 to accept a teaching position at Elk Grove High School. He taught at Elk Grove High School for 9 years, 8 of those years were spent as the school's first special education teacher. After starting in special education, he realized that there were very few materials available for the instruction of people with disabilities. This lack of educational materials prompted him to write 8 instructional workbooks which have sold approximately 1/2 million copies throughout the United States and overseas.

Few realized the Lawson Book Company of Elk Grove was headquartered in the Lawson garage, where his wife Vivian, and children, Karen and David, along with whichever neighbors they could draft did all the packaging and mailing. In 1964, Gary Lawson succeeded Don Larson as the principal of Jessie Baker School and held this position for 25 years. As principal he was very instrumental in founding the Retarded Adult Workshop, Project R.I.D.E. (Riding Instruction Designed for Education), and the Jessie Baker Special Games.

Mr. Lawson was also very involved with many other educational groups and has served as a the Past President of the Sacramento County Council for Exceptional Children, Past President of the Elk Grove Teachers Association, member of the Board of Directors of Sacramento Association for the Retarded, Past President of the Board of Directors of the Kiwanis Family House, former Board member of the Family Psychological Center of Elk Grove, as well as a former Board member of the Elk Grove Adult Community Training program. His dedication to education has earned him Elk Grove Citizen of the Year honors in 1988 and the Outstanding Educator Award from the Sacramento Association for the Retarded in 1994.

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