

## **Interview for the 30th Anniversary of the Club (2001) with Gordon Eldredge and Tim Healey This is only part of the original interview - discussing the "beginning"**

**Kevin Kooistra, Community Historian of the Western Heritage Center**

**Interview with Tim Healy and Gordon Eldredge for the Boys and Girls Club History Project.**

**Tim Healey was the Club's first Board Chair and Gordon Eldredge was the original Executive Director.**

### **How did Gordon Eldredge get involved in the process?**

Tim - One day I am in my office and in walks a man by the name of Gordon Eldredge from Baltimore - said he was on a little tour of the west with his family. I think he had been to see Maury Enright who was running the United Way - then called United Good Neighbors - and he referred you to me because he knew I had something to do with this thing. I told Gordon that we didn't have a soul, and we didn't - we didn't have a damn thing. All we had was hope. Anyway, Clarence Nybo and I were the personnel committee.

That's how Gordon appeared, and we debated - and thought, gee whiz, why does a guy who runs three organizations in Baltimore wants to come to Billings?

He was out west on a family trip studying Native American history and culture and just decided to see what Billings was all about, and the rest was history.

### **What happened in the beginning?**

Gordon - We had the kids - a three story brick building - we had one staff member and myself. Then we started to get kids in - in the beginning the kids on the south side didn't want anyone from across the tracks coming into the Club so it took a little while for them to understand that it was a Club for ALL boys so we went ahead and programmed it that way. Meanwhile I was visiting service Clubs, and one of the things I wanted was a printing press and a kitchen. We got the old kitchen from the old Chamber of Commerce, which is a restaurant now - the old Elks Club. I would go around talking, and so after a while volunteers started to come on board and started building rooms for us - in those days we would have a board meeting one month and the next month the board would come and suddenly another room would appear. It started to grow and I said, "I can't handle it just by myself." For a while the board members were coming down one night a week to help. Gradually we were able to build up the Club and add more staff through time.