

Reno's YMCA of the Sierra made the news over the future of the "Y" buildings on Foster Drive. In July 2007, the Reno City Council agreed to buy the structures for \$3.4 million and make it a community center. The deal brought a sigh of relief to neighbors who opposed a plan by developers to raze the original "Y" building and construct 52 houses.



2006-2007 newspaper accounts confuse the year when the YMCA moved from downtown Reno--the first building was dedicated November 12, 1911--to Foster Drive. News stories have included dates from 1956 to 1960. Arguably, the construction of the YMCA building in 1956 is recent history. In fact, there are people still living in the area who were around when the "Y" was dedicated.

One of those persons is former Nevada Supreme Court Justice Cliff Young. At the time of the dedication on September 7, Young was Nevada's lone member of the U.S. House of Representatives. A Lovelock native and graduate of the University of Nevada in Reno, the two-term Congressman served as the master of ceremonies at the "Y" dedication. The late U.S. Senator Alan Bible, another Lovelock native and graduate of the University of Nevada, was the speaker for the evening event.

A 1956 Reno Evening Gazette article noted that A.W. Plummer, the first president of the YMCA, had been asked to attend the dedication, but failing eyesight prevented him from participating in the event. The story included a photo of Plummer with Clark J. Guild, Jr, YMCA president; and Clarence Marshall, the outgoing executive secretary.

The American Legion post presented two flags at the dedication. James Rush, commander of the First Nevada District of the American Legion, was in charge of the presentation and dedication of the flags. Members of the municipal band entertained the audience. A YMCA board member, the Rev. Rafe C. Martin, gave the invocation. Well-known Reno vocalist Robert Herz sang "The Lord's Prayer" and Rev. Blake Franklin of the First Baptist Church presented the benediction.

The dedication featured YMCA President Guild presenting the building to the citizens of Reno. The cornerstone ceremony included placing a time capsule behind the stone; however, the contents were not identified in the Gazette story. Following the ceremony, an open house was held at the YMCA and tours were conducted by members of the Boys Leaders' Club.

Although many people attended the event, what happened that day appears to have been forgotten fifty years later. The date of the opening of the Foster Drive YMCA has not been accurately represented. While memories fade, people die, and newcomers have no personal connection to this bygone event, thanks to microfilmed newspapers there are ways to know what actually happened and when. The optical scanning of microfilmed newspapers into computer databases with keyword search is putting the information at our fingertips.

What we need to know now is what is in the time capsule behind the cornerstone!

Photo credit: Architect's concept of proposed YMCA on Foster Drive. Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, University Library, University of Nevada, Reno. Clarence F. Marshall papers, image UNRS-P1989-35-46.

The Historical Myths of the Month are published in the *Reno Gazette-Journal*, *Sierra Sage*, Carson City/Carson Valley; the *Humboldt Sun*; and the *Battle Mountain Bugle*.