

WOMEN FROM OUR PAST

When we look up to someone, is it because we respect her intelligence? Or perhaps because her sheer productivity makes her a standout. Maybe it's just because she's tall.

At 5 feet, 11 inches, the civic whirlwind named Nancy Gray met all three criteria. She stood, literally and figuratively, a jauntily hatted head and shoulders above the rest. Fort Collins has honored her posthumously, giving her name to the street on the west side of Timberline just north of Drake that leads to the new Fort Collins Police Services Building.

Nancy Price Gray was born in 1932 in Oshkosh, Wis. a registered nurse with musical training, Gray dabbled in acting while living in the Azores with her husband, a member of the U.S. Air Force.

The Grays and their three children came to Fort Collins in 1961

and it didn't take Nancy long to surface as an energetic civic leader.

Gray channeled her energies into serving Fort Collins on the City Council from 1973-1981, including a stint as mayor from 1980 to 1981. Never uninvolved, she was also a member of the Poudre Valley Hospital Board (1982-1990), the Colorado Lottery Commission (1989-1997) and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy Commission (1987-1995). Her work earned her the prestigious Susan B. Anthony Award, an honor reserved for those who have furthered the cause of equal opportunity for women and girls.

The accomplishments of which Gray was most proud included securing funding for the Crossroads Safehouse, encouraging the develop-



since well-behaved women rarely make history...

ment of the Fort Collins Trail System and helping to woo Anheuser-Busch to the city.

Bill Gray, a professor at Colorado State University who has earned the nickname "Mr. Hurricane" for his work in meteorology, says: "In Fort Collins I am still known as "Mr. Nancy Gray."

Gray faced a terminal disease in 2001 with her usual verve and aplomb. Toasting her friend and hospice volunteer Elizabeth Elliott, Gray's bravado and indomitability were clear as she raised a glass of the French aperitif Lillet and said: "OK, Elizabeth, we're going to show them how it's done."

It is gratifying to see Gray's greatest legacy to Fort Collins: the many women who follow her lead as community activists and volunteers. ❀

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