

## Special Thanks

The citizens of Columbia  
Mayor Brian Treece  
Columbia City Council  
City Manager Mike Matthes  
Deputy City Manager JJ Musgrove  
Parks and Recreation Commission  
Columbia Cosmopolitan Luncheon Club  
Boone County Historical Society  
Tom Adair Construction  
Christensen Construction  
Sellenriek Construction  
Seth Paul Excavation  
PlayPower LT Farmington, Inc.  
Crockett Engineering  
Rick Richardson Excavating



## **Cosmo Corner at Frank G. Nifong Memorial Park**

*Dedication and Ribbon Cutting*



[www.CoMo.gov](http://www.CoMo.gov) ~ 874-7460

The new Cosmo Corner at Nifong Park represents another example of great community partnerships.

Cosmo Corner comprises new park amenities that were made possible by a \$125,000 donation from the Columbia Cosmopolitan Luncheon Club and \$250,000 from the voter-approved Park Sales Tax. The Boone County Historical Society supported the sales tax ballot issue, and is a strong partner at Nifong Park.

The Cosmo Luncheon Club and Columbia Parks and Recreation have enjoyed a 68-year partnership. The Cosmos have been instrumental in many projects over the years, including Cosmo Park, Cosmo-Bethel Park, Riechmann Pavilion at Stephens Lake Park and the 4th of July Fire in the Sky, to name a few.

The latest collaboration is being dedicated today, the new Cosmo Corner at Nifong Park. Features include: a farm-themed playground named for former Cosmo Harry Gentry, new medium shelter named for former Cosmo Charles Gehrke, new small shelter, ADA fishing bulbout, two new parking lots and expansion of existing lot, LED parking lot lighting, ADA walkways, water fountain and new park signage.

These improvements enhance Nifong Park as an attraction, complementing the historic features already at the park, the Maplewood Home, Maplewood Barn and Boone Junction Historical Village.

Nifong Park has a rich history, originating as the Frank G. Nifong family farm. The City acquired 60 acres of the farm in 1970, thanks to a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. The park was dedicated that year.

We appreciate the support from the Cosmo Club and the Boone County Historical Society, as well as all Columbia citizens, making projects such as this one possible.

## **Cosmo Corner at Frank G. Nifong Memorial Park**

Dedication and Ribbon-cutting

5:45 p.m., June 8, 2017

Opening ~ Mike Griggs, Director, Columbia Parks and Recreation

Remarks ~ Chris Campbell, Executive Director, Boone County Historical Society

Remarks ~ Phil Hanson, Columbia Cosmopolitan Luncheon Club

Remarks ~ Wanda Northway, on behalf of the Gentry family

Remarks ~ Mayor Brian Treece

Conclusion ~ Mike Griggs

Ribbon-cutting

*Pre-ceremony music ~ The Burney Sisters*

### **City Council**

Brian Treece, Mayor

Clyde Ruffin

Michael Trapp

Karl Skala

Ian Thomas

Matt Pitzer

Betsy Peters

Mike Matthes, City Manager

John Glascock, Deputy City Manager

JJ Musgrove, Deputy City Manager

Mike Griggs, Parks and Recreation Director

### **Columbia Parks and Recreation Commission**

Marin Blevins, Sue Davis, Dan Devine, Linda Hutton,

Meredith Donaldson, Ted Farnen and Chad Henry

## Dr. Charles W. Gehrke

This shelter is dedicated to the memory and life of Dr. Charles W. Gehrke. Dr. Gehrke was born on July 18, 1917 in New York City to a German immigrant mother and laborer father. He grew up in a very poor family during the Great Depression. About the only thing he possessed was a desire for learning and a goal to receive a college education, and that he did. Gehrke earned his Bachelor of Art, Bachelor of Science, Masters of Science and Ph.D. degrees from Ohio State University.

Gehrke joined the University of Missouri's Agriculture Department in 1949 and soon thereafter joined the Cosmopolitan International Luncheon Club of Columbia, Missouri. Gehrke was an active, lifetime member of the club, serving as president in 1958. Gehrke also served Cosmopolitan International as Governor of the Missouri-Kansas Federation and as an International Vice President. Starting in 1977, Gehrke, along with Cosmo members Doug Mehle and Dr. Mahlon Fairchild, began working on establishing the Cosmopolitan International Diabetes Center at the University of Missouri. The center was completed and dedicated on November 10, 1983.

Dr. Gehrke was asked by NASA to analyze the moon rocks returned by the Project Apollo Missions in the 1970s, to identify any traces of extraterrestrial life. Gehrke was chosen because of his extensive experience in the field of amino acids. The instrument that his group used to examine the lunar materials is now housed in the Smithsonian Museum's National Air and Space Museum. Gehrke never lost his fascination with extraterrestrial biology. He was active in organizing conferences and working with researchers on space explorations and the future of humankind in space.

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## Harry L. Gentry

This playground is dedicated to the memory and legacy of Harry Gentry. Harry Gentry was a member of the Cosmopolitan International Luncheon Club of Columbia, Missouri for over 62 years. Harry served as club president in 1966 and was Cosmo of the Year in 1974 and 1989.

But as with many Cosmos, Harry was not only active in his civic duties as a Cosmo, he was active in all aspects of community and national duties. During World War II, Captain Harry L. Gentry was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, second only to the Congressional Medal of Honor, along with the Purple Heart and numerous awards from this nation and from France (including the Croix de Guerre).

After his service to our country, Harry returned to Columbia and started a long history of serving the community with service on many city boards and commissions, the Cosmopolitan Club, the public school system and various professional organizations. His skills and leadership honed during his years in the service evidenced themselves as he chaired the board of the Columbia Community Rehabilitation Center, chairman of the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission, followed by chairing the Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment.

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