

I recently met a real true North Park native. It was fun hearing her memories of growing up here in the 50's. Joyce Abram was born in a hospital which once existed in North Park; I believe she said Mercy Hospital on Illinois Street (??) and moved into her family home on Gregory Street street in 1949. She was 3 years old. Her family still owns the house, which was a mere 4 years old when they bought it and moved in!

She talks about what a wonderful life and idyllic childhood she had in North Park. It was, as she puts it, "...just like the Ozzie and Harriet kind of families we watched on TV". The neighborhood was filled with young families. It was an innocent era with children playing in the streets. McKinley Elementary was a top-notch school. She remembers attending school and community events in the amphitheatre that used to be on the campus. She attended McKinley from 1951-1958 and is thrilled that it has once again become a school to be so proud of. Though she now resides in La Jolla, she has remained active with McKinley over the past 50 years. She's done a great deal of work on behalf of the students and faculty there, including starting a foundation with private donations which eventually became the McKinley Parent Committee. She's looking forward to the McKinley alumni reunion on May 1st.



She remembers fondly how North Park was *the* place to be. Everyone who was anyone in San Diego lived in North Park, like local politicians and other movers and shakers. As she says, "It was truly the center of the city." University Ave was a vibrant area. As a child, she often went to movies at the now restored North Park Theatre, as well as at another theatre that was located across the street. She skated at the Palisades Roller Rink. (Now The Palisades mixed use condominium building.) She bowled at Aztec Bowl on 30th. (So did I before the tore it down and erected condos.) One of her teachers from McKinley used to routinely take the students to "Thrift Day" at the B of A; it was located on 30th where Cafe Calabria is now. (She told me you can still see the vaults in there.) Another teacher rewarded students for good behavior by taking them over to Carnations Ice Cream Store for, of course, ice cream. (I think she said that was on University Ave.) She remembers when the library on 31st & North Park Way was built, and what a huge event it was when Longs went in on University & 32nd. She shopped for her school clothes at Penny's (where Pic-n-Save used to be) and at Schlass (now A&B Sporting Goods - still in the same location on University.)

At the little commercial corner of 32nd & Thorn she recalls the Pigley Wiggly Grocery Store and Roy's Groceries. The neighborhood kids bought their candy at Chris' Market on Myrtle & Boundary, which as most of you know, is still there today. When Joyce was a kid they called it "Amelia's". She was Chris' daughter and worked the counter. There was another small market over by McKinley called Sterrett's Market (or something like that) but I was unable to dig up any info about it.

Thank you, Joyce, for sharing your memories. It's a good reminder that North Park has so much interesting history. It's one of the things that draws so many of us to the area.