

# DEPARTMENT HISTORY

The Collierville Parks and Recreation Department was established in October 1983 with the hiring of its first full-time Parks and Recreation Director. In February 1984, due to public interest in the parks and recreation program, the Board of Mayor and Alderman created the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, consisting of nine members of the community.

As the department began its quest to provide formal recreational services, there were two existing parks already located within the community – Suggs Park and Harris Park (Shelby County). However, planning had begun for the town's first Community Park – Powell Road Park. The Board of Mayor & Aldermen had approved funding for the new 108 acre park that would include the town's first community center and two (2) baseball/softball fields. As the project moved forward in the design phases, Mayor H. W. Cox noted the community's need for cultural arts programming and his vision for a community theatre. Powell Road Park and the Collierville Community Center opened for public usage in 1984. In 1987, the Harrell Theatre opened with 'Winnie the Pooh' as the facility's first community production.

An important step in the town's recreation planning process occurred in October 1991, when the Town adopted the *Conceptual Development Plan for Projected Park and Recreation Facilities*. This document was produced to guide the community's acquisitions of future desired parkland and facilities locations and to establish projected needs and standards. The adoption of the Town's 'Parkland Dedication Ordinance' in 1994 became an important component of the town's vision to provide strategic community and neighborhood park locations. Since this time, eight separate neighborhood parks (108 acres) and one community Park (110 acres) have been added into the system as a result of the Parkland Dedication Ordinance.

In 1992, the Town received a land donation of 132 acres from WC 'Clint' Johnson for the purpose of building a new park. Located within the Wolf River Corridor and including 65 acres of natural wolf river bottomland, this new community park had the unlimited potential to provide both active and passive recreational opportunities to a Collierville Community that was booming with residential development. A park conceptual master plan was created and included five (5) new baseball/softball fields, two (2) new multi-purpose athletic fields, concession buildings, two lakes, and a series of nature trails and boardwalks. The Town of Collierville has added an additional 139 acres to the park since 1995.

In September 1994, the Town adopted the *Collierville Greenbelt Master Plan* to develop a greenbelt system throughout Collierville. The original greenbelt master plan recommended over 60 miles of trails and sidewalk connections that would encompass the entire planning region and linking neighborhoods with parks, schools, and centers of trade. First priority of the new alternative transportation system was a series of trails connecting Powell Road Park and WC Johnson Park, this section of trail runs from White Road through H. W. Cox Jr. Park to W. C. Johnson Park via the "wagon trail", in 1995.

Perhaps the single biggest contributor to the Collierville Park System was the commitment during the FY 2002 year to add an additional \$.10 property tax to be designated for our Park improvement tax. Some of the projects that have been funded from this revenue source include: WCJ Baseball Complex, Peterson Lake Nature Center – Phase II, Nonconnah Regional Greenbelt Trail, WCJ Spray Park Expansion, HW Cox Tennis Courts Expansion, Estanaula Park Tennis Courts, WCJ Multi-Purpose Synthetic Turf Field renovations, the land purchase for 110 acre Hinton Park, construction on Hinton Park, several renovations of the Harrell Theatre and expansion of the H. W. Cox Jr. Community Center.

In November 2015 Hinton Park was dedicated as the newest property in the Collierville Parks system. The Collierville Greenbelt System continues to expand in 2015 and 2016 with an additional two miles along the Wolf River corridor and Wolf River Blvd.

The Collierville Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Arts Department is extremely proud of our accomplishments over these past 30 years and anticipate with eagerness the challenges that await us in providing the recreational opportunities that best serve the Citizens of Collierville. We continue to be committed to presenting an overall park system that meets the expectations of its residents and provides a 'Community for Family Living'.

During 2015 the Department purchased an additional five acres of land at Progress Road Park. During FY 2015 the Department constructed additional athletic fields next to the existing fields.

The Collierville Parks System now consists of over 750 acres of land in 16 Parks and an additional 275 acres of wetlands, greenways, open space and natural areas.