

## Thoughts from a Concerned Resident of Riverside

I moved my family back to Windsor in 1979 and at the urging of my wife decided to make Riverside our home. My wife had attended school in the Riverside area and fell in love with the community. We bought a house very close to St. Rose church and school just east of Riverside Arena and park which we still live in today.

It wasn't very long before we became very involved in the community and Riverside Arena and park became a second home for my three children. Each of my children learned how to swim at the community pool at the park and spent many hours there during the summer months. My son played hockey at the arena for several years in the winter months and baseball with Riverside baseball in the summer. My girls also got involved with figure skating each winter and both of them played in the girl's softball league at the park as well each summer.

I also got to enjoy the park. We always had a dog for the children as they were growing up and I would walk those dogs almost every night around the school and through the park. It was a nightly ritual that I totally enjoyed. I got to get a little exercise, talked to neighbours who were also out for a walk, and maybe take in a few innings of a baseball game. Believe it or not I did this almost every night for over 30 years.

The park literally became the "HUB" of Riverside for me and my family. When the arena was demolished a few years ago we not only lost a building, but we also lost part of our identity. The core of our community was disappearing. The Cenotaph that once was so proudly displayed in front of the arena and close to Wyandotte Street for all to see was relegated to the end of a parking lot out of main sight lacking the respect and honour it deserved. For those of us whose parents, grandparents, and family served in the military during the wars this was a great disservice to their memory.

It seems that in each of the different areas of Windsor there is a park that defines them. For the west end there is Micmac park; for old Walkerville there is Willistead park; for South Walkerville there is Optimist Park; for South Windsor there is Central park. It would seem that each community in Windsor has a park at its core and is the heart and hub of that community. That is what Riverside Park is for our community, but lately it has been losing its lustre. The only thing holding it together is the Riverside Minor Baseball Association.

It is my belief and many others that Riverside park can be that hub again under the proposed plans put forth by the RMBA. Their plan has foresight and I believe will attract many young families to move into the Riverside area in a family friendly environment. There has been too many of our young families that have moved to Tecumseh and surrounding communities because we don't have enough to offer them to stay.

We have a chance to do something about this if we support the Miracle Diamond and the improvements that are proposed by the RMBA for Riverside park. It is my hope that the City of Windsor will approve their request.

Sincerely,

David Leslie