

My Waddell A-Truss Bridge Adventure

by Carolyn Elwess

Some of the readers who enjoyed the City's excellent article in the last newsletter regarding English Landing Park and the unique bridge that spans Rush Creek very likely had a part in the development of that huge project. Perhaps that was due to the persuasiveness of Park Board member Jack Friedman.

I moved to Parkville in 1987 knowing only three residents, one of whom was Jack. I knew him from one day in 1968 when he entered Park College as a transfer student with all the delicacy of a freight train. He and I both graduated in 1971 – I moved away but Jack stayed and when I came back to make Parkville my home he immediately collared me and put me to work clearing brush in what is now our beautiful riverfront park.

I knew he had organized some darn good events at school, but I never saw anything like what he did to relocate a dismantled and rusty historic bridge and make it part of our park. He had the talent of locating the experts mentioned in May 29, 1998 article from *The Southern Platte Press* and engaging their interest and dedication – it was fascinating to watch him at work – but he also had that other necessary characteristic –that of seeing a project through to completion.

I will never regret the hours I spent working on the “easy stuff” like wiring the concrete forms or providing “security” to keep walkers of the newly painted bridge or digging out grape vine roots – it was worth it. 31 years later we are still walking across that beautiful bridge and every time I do, I think of Jack.

Jack Friedman was instrumental in coordinating efforts to bring the Waddell A-Truss Bridge to Parkville. Others involved in the efforts included Dr. George Hauck, UMKC professor, and his students who developed a plan to transport the bridge; Richard Bateman, US Corps of Engineers, who located the bridge; Tom Skinner, bridge engineer, who garnered interest from the construction community; a Wisconsin company that provided rivets for the bridge; Don Wilson, Bratton Corp., who coordinated efforts to reassemble the bridge; members of Ironworkers Local No. 10; and countless volunteers. Jack and many volunteers worked together to transport, reassemble and get the bridge ready for park visitors. The bridge was open to the public in spring 1988.