
FROM TIME TO TIME

A Publication of the Commerce City Historical Society

JANUARY-APRIL 2026

Volume 17, Issue 1

Honoring Our Past – Celebrating Our Future



BOARD MEMBERS

Debra Bullock



Barb McMillan



Sheila Harris



Candy Machuga



Reba Drotar



Diane Vigil-Musick

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Phone: 303-288-2590 Website: www.cchistoric.com

Email: cchistoricalsociety@yahoo.com

Address: 6505 East 60th Avenue, Commerce City, CO 80022

FOR THE NEWSLETTER

All submissions are welcome, including obituaries. Send submissions to Debra Bullock (photos or stories).

SEND TO: cchistoricalsociety@yahoo.com, or call 303-288-2590

WELCOME VISITORS

**We are open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday
from 10 am – 2 pm**

Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday by appointment!

CCHS CHARTER MEMBERS...

Joy Bishop	Gary Drotar	Dustin McIntyre
Hester Bonnell	Reba Drotar	Loretta Petty
Debra Bullock	Samantha Ford	Don Sater
Rene' Bullock	Sean Ford	JoAnn Stevenson
Thelma Cole	Esther Hall	Dick Stevenson
Cindy Comstock	Bob Hutchings	Janet Union
Gary Comstock	Dorothy Hutchings	Norm Union
Kristi Douglas	Gene Leffel	June Younger
Steve Douglas	David Lutter	Troy Younger

History has no boundaries-Come celebrate yours!

Commerce City Historical Society OUR VISION...

“To Preserve the Commerce City Area History”

Because History Matters!

OUR MISSION...

- To accurately collect, memorialize, preserve and maintain the rich physical history of the peoples and times of the Great City of Commerce City.
- We will encourage all generations of the area to discover and embrace their great history and roots.

- The Society will work to collect history for the past, present and future boundaries of the City of Commerce City.
- The Society will establish and illustrate the history of the area.
- The Society will preserve such materials and make them accessible to all who wish to examine or study them.
- Collaborate with officials and other organizations to insure the preservation and accessibility of the records and archives of the City of Commerce City.
- The Society will maintain a museum for the protection, preservation and exhibition of all such materials.
- The Society will encourage the preservation of historic buildings by marking those buildings, sites and trails.
- The Society will be involved in various fundraising activities through grant writing and special events.

CCHS MEMBERSHIP-127 MEMBERS

FOUNDING MEMBERS

INDIVIDUAL

FAMILY

BUSINESS

MEMORIAL

SENIOR LIFETIME

LIFETIME

If you would like to become a member, see the application on the last page



Meet our new museum volunteer:

George Medina

George P. Medina, a 71 yr. Commerce Town native, b1954 DEN Gen Hosp. to Elevi A & Ciria Medina home on 53rd ST, family growth in 64 had us moving to a new Gifford home on 62nd. We attended St Catherine's Church for masses, catechism for 9 yrs. w/ baptism, 1st Communion, and Confirmation. Public schools were Rose Hill, Kearney & ACHS grad of 72. Work began with truck farm labor for Frank, Ann & Jr. Teti, Henderson; café work began in 68 w/full-time nights teamster work in Mar.72. A yr. later in June, I took the employment test for USPS, started clerk work July 73, advancing thru 44 yrs. ending as a Network Operation. Analyst. Back in Oct. 73, Rose Sanchez (AC73) found me involved in a vehicle accident; we wed in Aug. 74. Parenting & CC homeownership arr. In 75, with Lori (b. 76; AC94) and Paul (b.78; AC96). College was CU & Metro for Lori and all CU for Paul. Some CC friends might remember us from Central, Kearney or AC or from the accompanying girl/boy scouts, CC sports, CCYA

football, AC Youth Wrestling Club, voting since 72/73 or just as neighbors. We attained “sweet& loving status” as Grand and Great-Grandparents w/our Grands Brandon, Bryson, Max and Aubrey; and our Greats Rogan and Paxtyn.

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

REBA DROTAR

Reba, a native of Commerce City, has extensive knowledge of its history. Reba is a past business owner of the Blue Rose Restaurant and Catering Company and she also served her community as a Councilwoman on the Commerce City City Council for 9 years. Reba also served on numerous boards and commissions throughout the years. Reba has 40 years of experience working with students of all ages, having worked with Adams County School District 14 as a volunteer and as an employee. Reba currently volunteers at the Roucky Mountain Arsenal Refuge. Reba’s number one love is her husband Gary, and her family. Reba has been devoted to the well being of people of Commerce City and the preservation of their stories and history her entire life.



DIANE VIGIL MUSICK



Diane was raised in Commerce City and attended elementary, junior high and high school in Adams 14 schools. She received a degree for design and has a successful design business for over thirty years. She has one son, two grandchildren and is married to Ian Musick. They live in Commerce City. She is honored to be a board member of the historical society, and she is looking forward to serving on the board.

City Council Reception January 31, 2026



Marilyn Krause birthday celebration at the museum- March 14



Spring Clean Up! Thank you to all of our volunteers for helping with our *Spring Clean Up* at the Dottie Bakke House

April 11, 2026



Rick & Doreen Gunning, Debra
Vigil Musick, Barb McMillan,



Mike Lynn, Justin, and Machuga



Bullock, Reba Drotar, Diane
Jim Kinghorn, Sheila Harris,

Commerce City Historical Society congratulates the South Adams County Water & Sanitation District on their 75th year anniversary.



Did you know...

The South Adams County Water and Sanitation District was formed in 1951 under the State of Colorado Special District provisions to serve the area now known as Commerce City. Although the District serves the Commerce City population, it is a separate entity and is presently the largest combined Water and Sanitation District in the state of Colorado covering over 65 square miles and serving nearly 50,000 customers.

The district experienced little growth until 1998 selling only 50 new taps in a good year and provided services to about 10,000 equivalent residential units (ERUs). The district's water was mainly from Alluvial and Arapahoe well supplies capable of yielding up to 6800 acre-ft. of water per year, which could serve approximately 13,600 ERUs. In 1989, the Klein Water Treatment Center opens, and is a state-of-the-art facility for Commerce city.

In 1996, the Record of Decision (ROD) for the cleanup of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal was complete. Two significant components of the ROD were the designation of the Arsenal as a future Wildlife Refuge and addition of a 4000 acre-ft. additional water supply to the District. This supplemental supply is treated water purchased from Denver Water that is

blended with the district's potable well water supply before delivery to its customers. In 1997,

Once the Record of Decision was complete the development community started viewing the Commerce City area as a place that held great potential for future residential and commercial development.

With a great deal of hard work and cooperation from the City of Commerce City and the development community, the district was able to build critical water and wastewater infrastructure to launch new development in the northern portion of the district.

Currently, The District's water supplies are capable of providing up to 27,000 acre-ft. of water per year. This development allows us to serve approximately 54,000 ERUs.

These water supplies include treated water from Denver Water, surface water supplied off of the farmer's reservoir and Irrigation Company's water supply system, expanded potable alluvial well supplies, and a separate irrigation system.

The district also has one of the nation's largest separate irrigation systems in the northern area of Commerce City. This separate system provides non-potable alluvial well water to residential, commercial, and industrial customers for irrigation and other non-potable uses.

In 2013a new Water Department Headquarters building was opened and dedicated to Joann Stevenson.

A new Ennis hardening treatment process and building was completed in 2020 and dedicated to John Ennis.

The district has been proactively working to decrease PFAS in the water. The district is using activated carbon to treat water, using water from wells where concentrations of PFAS can be lowered with current technology. The new facility is planned to be completed by late 2026.

THERE ARE 5 THINGS IN LIFE YOU CANNOT RECOVER:

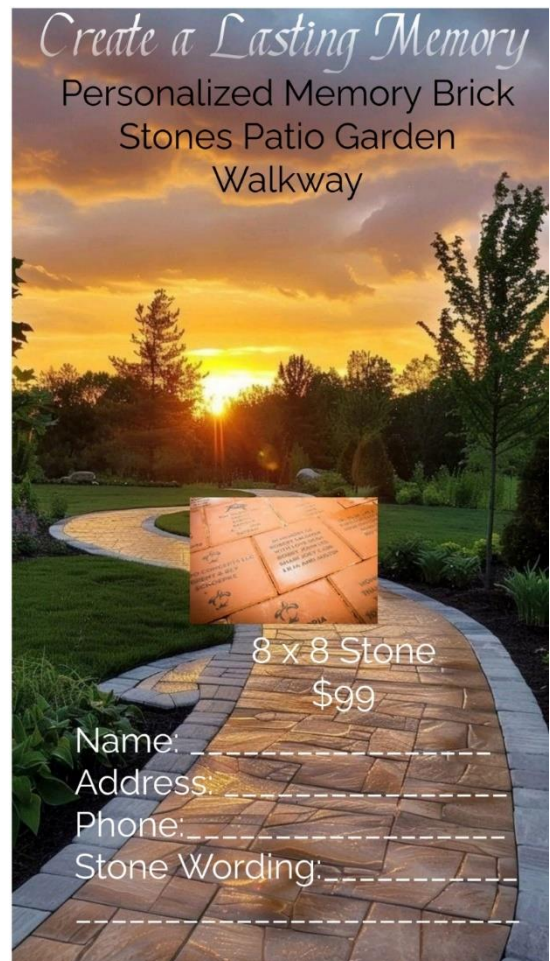
1. A STONE...after it is thrown
2. A WORD...after it is said
3. AN OCCASION...after it's missed
4. THE TIME...after it is gone
5. A PERSON...after they die

Life is short. Break the rules. Forgive quickly. Kiss slowly. Love truly. Laugh uncontrollably. And never regret anything that made you smile. ENJOY LIFE!!!

BUY A BRICK....

THE CCHS IS Selling bricks for the
History Legendary Locals Path at
the Dottie Bakke House.

If you are interested call
Debra Bullock 303-946-3426 or
Reba Drotar 303-921-1972



History thrives through our collective participation and
community involvement.

History connects us to the larger human story and our
place in it.

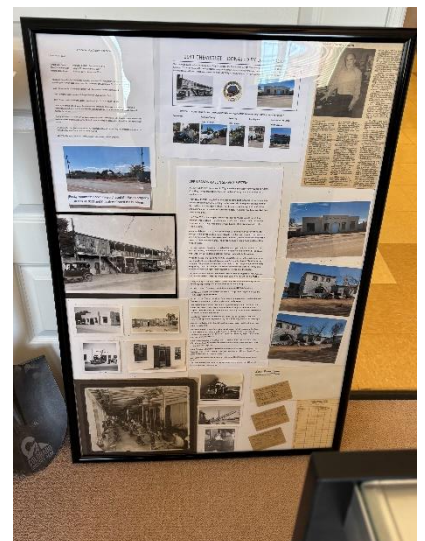
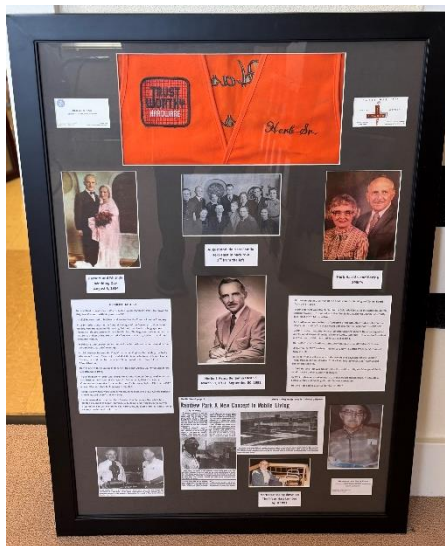
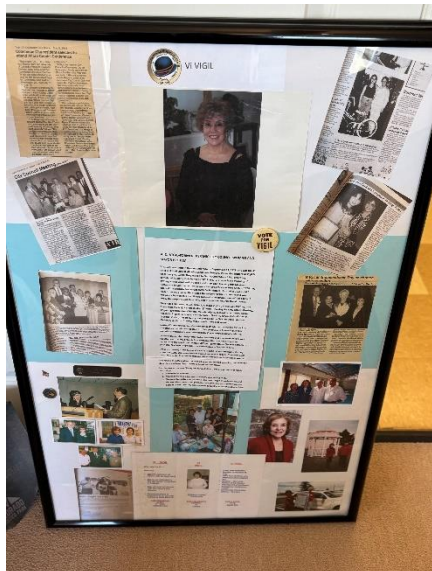
History doesn't just happen; we make it together.

History never stops, nor do we.

History Matters!

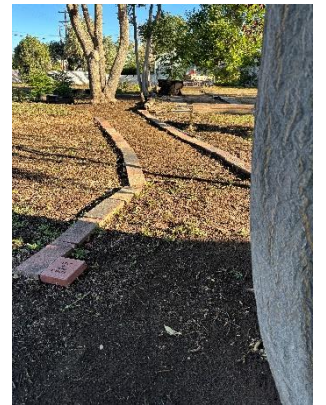
Please consider becoming a member or giving a donation
to the Commerce City Historical Society.

Please consider recording your family history. Bring us
the information and we will put it in our Family Frames.



WHAT IS NEW AT THE DOTTIE BAKKE HOUSE

New Stairs, Legendary Locals Path underway, New Garden layout, New Pergola, Pavers in the front yard & grass, new sewer line, Sprinkler system upgrade and new cameras. Moving right along with preserving this historic place in Commerce City.





The Dottie Bakke House being preserved by the Commerce City Historical Society

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Preservation is more than bricks and mortar – it is about cultural heritage, sustainability, economic development, heritage tourism, and more. The history of any city is an important window into the lives, values, and priorities of the people who live there. The preservation of our history plays a vital role in maintaining the established character of a place and sustaining that character. We the Commerce City Historical Society believe that preserving this piece of our history is a start to local preservation. In 2015, the city council adopted a Historic Preservation Plan. To move forward with this plan the steps that must be taken first are the following.

- ❖ Create and adopt a historic preservation ordinance
 - ❖ Establish a historic preservation board
- ❖ Establish criteria for what is considered historic in Commerce City
- ❖ Initiate a plan to survey and identify historic places in the city
- ❖ Establish procedures for nominating and recognizing historic places
 - ❖ Research the culturally diverse history in Commerce City

One of our goals for 2026 is to encourage city council to act on this plan and get things moving forward for historic preservation in Commerce City.

Out & About

Republic Services has electric trucks January 13, 2026

Operated by Republic Services, the EV collection fleet is a major milestone in Commerce City's commitment to sustainable operations.



Cocklebur Reimagined Reception February 22, 2026



Members of the Commerce City Council and the
Commerce City Cultural Council. —————→

COCKLEBUR was reimagined after the bronze horse was stolen two times. This artwork pays tribute to the previous equine statue that stood in its place, which honors the late Cocklebur horse owned by the Conter family. The Conter family owned the land that Pioneer Park now sits on. Cocklebur was the horse of Catherine Conter, who was reprimanded by the city for keeping the horse on her property in the 1970's. The horse became a symbol for defiance and was eventually welcomed back to the farm's property. Cocklebur and Catherine were intertwined and spent more than 18 years together. No one is living from the Conter family line, but Commerce City still honors the family's history and their long-lasting impact on the area. The artist was Robert Bell, hired by the Commerce City Cultural Council to complete the piece of public art for the city of Commerce City.

Are you in need of a garden space?



**We have spaces
for rent!**

Call Debra Bullock

303-946-3426

MEMBER & SPECIAL FRIENDS OBITUARIES...



Ann Lynette Malloy

June 20th, 1948 - December 25th, 2025

Ann Lynette “Lynette” Malloy passed away on December 25, 2025, in Colorado. She was born on June 20, 1948, in Texas to Olen and Merna Ledgerwood. Lynette was married to Patrick Hugh Malloy for 46 years. He preceded her in death, as did her parents. She is survived by her sister, Kristy Ledgerwood, whom she loved deeply. Lynette graduated from Adams City High School and Colorado Women’s College, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. She later retired after a fulfilling career and remained actively involved in her community. She dedicated countless hours to volunteering with the Commerce City Housing Authority. In recognition of her service and commitment, a wing at the Conter Estates Senior Apartments was named in her honor: the Malloy–Lewis Wing, a lasting testament to her impact on the lives of others. Earlier in life, Lynette was a Girl Scout in Troop 514 in Commerce City. Being part of Troop 514 afforded her many experiences she otherwise would not have had and helped shape her independence, confidence, and sense of service to others. Lynette was loving, “stubborn” in her words, self-reliant, loyal to those she loved, and strong as well as a woman of strength. She was a Christian woman. In addition, she had an amazing memory, was generous, kind, and had a good sense of humor. She had a lifelong love of animals and shared her home with many beloved dogs and cats over the years. She was an avid reader and a Denver Broncos fan, which she enjoyed following with enthusiasm. While she delighted in April Fool’s Day, Christmas held a particularly special place in her heart, and she proudly kept some Christmas decorations displayed year-round. Lynette will be remembered as a devoted sister, a loyal friend, and a steady presence to those who knew her. Lynette will be laid to rest with her husband at Fort Logan National Cemetery on January 14, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. Her sister would like to thank Lynette’s close circle of friends, colleagues, and family for their love, care, and support.

Ann C. Emerson

APRIL 9, 1932 – JANUARY 4, 2026

Ann was born on April 9, 1932, to Axel and Lillie Johnson. She always spoke fondly of her childhood on the dairy farm in what is now Commerce City, Colorado where she was raised with her brothers Robert (Bob) and Gerald (Jerry). In 1950 she graduated from Adams City High School. She married Edward (Eddie) Emerson in 1953. Ann and Eddie settled in Commerce City and raised their three daughters: Julie, Loraine and Karen. She took joy in being a wife, a mother and later a grandmother of six, with unwavering love and devotion.



Ann was a woman of steadfast faith and a lifelong Lutheran who was baptized, confirmed and married at Bethany Lutheran Church in Denver. She raised her daughters in the faith at Nativity Lutheran Church in Commerce City where she remained a devoted member for 62 years. To all who knew her, Ann was a friend. She could talk to anyone. She cared deeply and could always be counted on to give someone a ride, send a card, or feed the entire yearbook committee last minute. She treasured her relationships, in contact with friends from grade school into her nineties. Schoolmates, neighbors, and friends she made along the way were touched by her kind spirit and indomitable positive attitude.

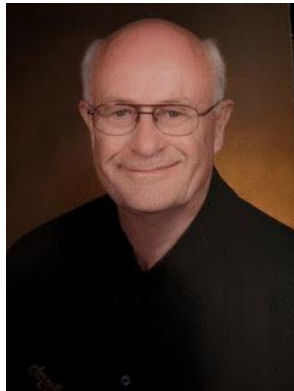
The only thing better than being Ann's friend was being her family. She cherished everything that was important to her daughters, her grandchildren, and their loved ones. If one of them was going through a hard time, they were in her nightly prayers. However they needed support, she was there. She regularly shared a cup of coffee with her brothers. She was an avid Denver Nuggets fan and once received a ticket to cheer them on at Ball Arena seated with all six of her grandchildren. She had a habit of bringing people together that way, and to have been loved by her was a gift.

In 2000, Ann traveled to Sweden, a meaningful trip since she was descended from Swedish immigrant grandparents and was proud of her heritage. Her excellent Swedish rye bread baking skills were a treat every Christmas Eve. She was a member of the Commerce City Historical Society where a corner of the Society's Museum is devoted to her family's dairy farm, one of the first established in the area.

She was preceded in death by her parents Axel and Lillie Johnson, her husband Edward Emerson and her brother Robert Johnson. She is survived by her daughters Julie (Ed) Hohn, Loraine (Alan) Trudell and Karen (Glenn) Seberg, her brother Gerald Johnson, and her

grandchildren David, Daniel, Jeffrey Hohn, Hanna, Garrett (Chelsea) Trudell, Ryan (Ayla) Seberg and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held January 16th, 2026 at 11:00 am at Nativity Lutheran Church, 12500 E 104th Ave., Commerce City, CO.



LAVERNE FRANZEN

JANUARY 12, 1941 – JANUARY 5, 2026

LaVern Ivan Franzen, age 84, of Granbury, Texas, passed away unexpectedly on January 5, 2026, surrounded by the love of his family. He left this world quietly, carrying with him remarkable grace and strength, guided by his faith in God and a lifelong calling to help others.

LaVern was born on January 12, 1941, in Denver, Colorado. From a young age, he learned the plumbing trade from his father and went on to become the youngest Master Plumber in Colorado. Over the course of his career, LaVern earned Master Plumber certifications in Colorado, California, Georgia, Nebraska, Kansas, Nevada, Wyoming, and New Mexico. He owned Franzen and Son's Plumbing with family from 1958 to 1974 in Denver, Colorado. He at that time, left Colorado, started Gateway Plumbing and B&L Plumbing, in California, Georgia, and Colorado from 1975 until his retirement until 2004.

Deeply committed to public service, LaVern served on the Water & Sanitation Board of South Adams County, Colorado from 1964 to 1971 and also the president of Jaycees for a year, along with being very active in all of the events sponsored by the local Colorado Jaycees during this time.

LaVern was also a Commerce City Councilman from 1970 to 1976. He was the youngest council member at that time. He was extremely involved in the Commerce City growth and development. He was elected by the people of Commerce City to frame the Home Rule Charter for Commerce City in 1971. He was a voice to be heard on the council and was several times challenged for a recall of his seat, but the recalls all failed. He was also advised that the Adams County Board of County Commissioners had appointed him as a member of the Adams County Airport Advisory Committee.

Alongside his professional life, LaVern discovered a passion for white water river rafting. He owned his own rafts and participated in Outward Bound Wilderness programs with his sister Ellene through the Denver Public School System, where he and his team-taught high school students the skills of rafting while emphasizing personal responsibility, teamwork, and environmental preservation. He also took rafting trips down the Yampa and Green Rivers with his sister Ellene and brother Al, family and friends. It became a very big passion of his.

LaVern and his first wife, Carolyn, raised four children—Barry, Blain, Becca, and Brenna—whom he loved deeply and of whom he was immensely proud.

In 1980, LaVern met Beverly, and they were married in 1983. Together they shared a life full of adventure, including rafting and skiing, while working hard throughout their careers. In 2002, they purchased their home in Pecan Plantation, where they built a wonderful life together.

After retiring from plumbing in 2004, LaVern embraced new interests such as art, woodworking, and shucking pecans, while continuing to travel and spend cherished time with family and friends.

Never one to stop serving others, LaVern pursued another lifelong dream by completing his EMT certifications and joining Pecan Plantation EMS in 2006. His dedication and compassion earned him numerous honors, including Outstanding EMT-B awards in 2010, 2011, and 2013, and Crew Member of the Year in 2015. He retired from EMS service in 2023.

LaVern also devoted countless hours to volunteerism, serving on the Pecan Plantation Owners Association (PPOA) Infrastructure Committee (2013–present), Architectural Committee (2015–present), and the PPOA VFD/EMS Board (2025–present). With his church went to Africa 3 different years to help build houses for children who had lost both parents to aids.

LaVern was preceded in death by his brother Alvin Franzen.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Beverly Franzen; siblings Karen Franzen Johnson (Gerald), Ellene Franzen Austin (Richard), and Lois Franzen Clegg; his children Barry Franzen (Kimberly), Blain Franzen (Lena), Becca Franzen Acken (Peter), and Brenna Franzen Trujillo (Anthony); eight grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren.

LaVern was a remarkable man—strong yet humble, gentle yet unwavering, a devoted husband, loving father, and a servant-hearted presence to all who knew him. He will be dearly missed.

Celebration of Life was held On May 3, at Balistreri Winery

Gerald Lee VonFeldt

March 25, 1944 – January 5, 2026

Gerald Lee VonFeldt “Jerry”, age 81, of Commerce City, Colorado, passed away on January 5, 2026. He was born on March 25th, 1944, in Hays, Kansas to parents Clarence A. and Anna M. (Brown) VonFeldt. The family moved to Colorado in 1949 in pursuit of work. Jerry grew up in the Brighton, Derby and Commerce City area and attended Irondale, Central Elementary and Adams City Junior and Senior high where he graduated in 1962. He attended Colorado State College in Greeley for 2 years with a desire to pursue a career in law or architectural



design. In 1963, he married his long-time sweetheart from Junior and Senior high school, Ellen (Stertz) VonFeldt and in 1964 they started a family.

Jerry is survived by: Sister Shirley Lovett, brother Wayne VonFeldt, son Jason VonFeldt and his wife Dana, son Douglas VonFeldt and his wife Shanna, and three beloved grandchildren, Lily June, Jason David, and Colton Lee. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and many, many good friends.

Jerry liked to say he was “a jack of many trades and master of none”, but he was the person you would call when you needed help. He worked in many trades, butcher, tax assessor, railroad, insurance sales, contractor, handyman and business owner. Jerry had amazing talents such as drawing, wood working or just fixing things. He loved to learn and analyze things and had an ever-inquisitive mind.

But what he really enjoyed was fishing, hunting, and spending time outdoors. Even better if it was with his boys. He was an amazing fisherman. If anyone could catch a fish it was Jerry. He made friends easily and was often the life of the party, known for his quick wit and welcoming smile. Before the onset of his health problems from a very severe stroke. Jerry loved playing Santa Claus for his local community. Throughout the year, he collected small gifts to present to underprivileged children in the community who visited him while playing Santa. He loved bringing joy and laughter to their faces, or anyone he met.

Jerry began life with a significant challenge. He was born with clubbed feet and doctors initially recommended amputation. His parents refused and instead pursued other corrective treatments. Those treatments allowed him to pursue a somewhat normal life to the outside world, but internally, he endured extreme pain. Jerry wouldn't allow it to stop him and he would put on his best face, wipe away the tears of pain and step outside to take on the world. Through determination and resilience, Jerry fought through those obstacles and tried to enjoy everything. He wrote in his class reunion catch up: It took him 40 years to get here and he now enjoys everything and anything and will continue to when he retires.

Jerry will be remembered for his kindness, humor, generosity, and the genuine warmth he shared with everyone he met.

Services were held on February 6, at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Commerce City, Colorado



GAIL ELIZABETH (NUGENT) HAST

May 12, 1939 ~ January 8, 2026

Gail Hast, 86, formerly of Westcliffe, Colo., passed away January 8, 2026, in Centennial, Colo. Widow of Herbert Hast Jr, originally from Commerce City, Colo., retired to Westcliffe, Colo. in 1998. Gail is survived by their 2 daughters, Stephanie (Bruce) Clow and their daughters, Katherine and Megan, all of Denver, Colo. and Reneé (Sal) Stabila of Westcliffe, Colo. and their blended family including, James (Emily) Seelbach of Lorain, Ohio and their 2 children, Alicia Stabila currently serving USAF

@Stuttgart Germ and her 2 children, Christopher (Amy) and their 4 children of Pangburn, Ark.

Gail Hast was born in Lebanon, N.H., on May 12, 1939, eldest of 4 daughters, to Freeman Priest Nugent and Georgianna (Woodward) Nugent, graduated from Lebanon High School in 1957.

Gail married Herby on May 23, 1959, and moved to Colorado.

Gail is preceded in death by her husband; her parents; and her 3 sisters, Ann, Judy and Linda.

Graveside service, 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, at Hope Lutheran Cemetery, Westcliffe



Robert Gene Medina

February 29th, 1948 - January 29th, 2026

Robert G. Medina, 77 of Commerce City, Colorado died on Thursday, January 29th in Westminster, Colorado.

Born Sunday, February 29th in Denver, Colorado. He was the son of the late Joe Medina and the late Geneva Medina.

He served in the Army from 1968 to 1971. He was a Vietnam veteran.

Surviving are: Loving wife Debby, son Jonathan, brother Lorence (Laurie): nephew Joel, niece Amy (Brent); cousins George (Patricia), Mike (Dorthy), Mary, and Amelia; and other beloved family members.

Bob was born in Brush, Colorado on February 29th, 1948, to the late Joe and Geneva Medina. Being a leap year baby, many joked that he would only be one fourth of his age in years based on

the number of birthdays that actually fell on the 29th. His last official birthday was in 2024. He made it to the ripe old age of 19.

In 1952, Bob's family moved to what is now Commerce City, Colorado, where Bob grew up with his younger brother, Lorence. They were good buddies and remained so all their lives. When Bob and Lorence's aunt passed away, the family expanded to include his cousins; Mary, George, Mike and Amelia. Hearing Bob talk about their relationships, it was obvious they felt more like siblings than cousins. For many years they would gather during the holidays at Bob and Lorence's parents' house where they shared stories from their lives, laughed at many jokes, and enjoyed the wonderful food that made it feel like home. After Joe and Geneva passed away, Lorence, and his wife, Laurie, would host barbecues every summer, as well as Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner, keeping traditions alive with his brother and sister-in-law.

Bob was naturally athletic, as both his father and mother had been. He played sports in his youth, and throughout school. Bob was gifted in many ways, but he also had a strong work ethic, something he learned from his dad, and he knew that practice made perfect. He took a shine to basketball and excelled in his craft. In a sport that, now-a-days requires a great deal of height, Bob and his teammates used another strategy to defeat their opponents – their hearts. They won the State Championship for Adams City High School in 1966. They were revered by the community and invited back years later when the next generation's team was headed to state.

Bob entered the Army in 1968 and, typical of the times, was shipped off and stationed in Vietnam. As is the case for many veterans of this war, he didn't talk about it an awful lot. However, as he got older, he finally shared some insights and personal perspectives. You could really feel his strong emotions when he talked about friends he lost there. Before Bob left the Army, he was offered the opportunity to go to West Point to become an officer, but he declined, not wanting a lifetime in the military. Even so, this was quite an honor.

After going back to college, Bob ended up at Mountain Bell and, what started as a job, ended up being a career. Bob stayed on as the company transitioned from Mountain Bell to U.S. West and then finally to Century Link. Later, he retired from Century Link and went on to I.B.M, eventually retiring from there as well. While at U.S. West, Bob met the person who became the love of his life, Debby. As their relationship grew, they found themselves enjoying many activities together such as traveling to Florida and California and enjoying a day of entertainment in Blackhawk. Some years ago, Bob bought his dream car, a Corvette, and the two of them enjoyed going to local car shows. One other thing they quite enjoyed was dancing. And boy could they dance! You could find them almost every weekend at a Tom Slick show tearing up the dance floor.

Bob didn't realize it at first, but he was an animal lover. As it turned out, cats were his favorite. A most enjoyable fact about Bob and Debby's love for cats, is that they built a luxury cat hotel in their backyard shed, complete with blankets and heaters for the winter! So, It's clear Bob and Debby had a unique relationship with each cat they had and it was heartwarming to hear the stories they would share.

In 1989, Jonathon was born. Bob loved him from the beginning and every day forward! He put all effort into never missing an event that Jonathon was in, be it a Christmas play or playing the organ at the Church. Jonathon loved Disneyland and this, of course, brought out the child in Bob. Jonathon told a story of one particular visit to Disneyland when they had just sat down for lunch. Jonathan was eating a hot dog and noticed there was a sign that said, "do not feed the animals," so Jonathon hesitated to toss pieces of his hot dog bun to the ducks. Then, he looked over and saw a squirrel sitting on a table eating French fries out of a man's bag! After that Jonathan decided that the rules were not strictly enforced and, perhaps, they could feed the ducks after all. So, the three of them shared a smile as they tossed bread to the eagerly waiting ducks.

Bob was able to retire at a fairly young age, freeing him up to enjoy life as he saw fit. Golf was a big part of that. As mentioned before, Bob knew that practice made perfect. He took that to a new level with golf. He was always buying new clubs, tweaking his swing, trying different styles of putting, and he was relentless in his pursuit of a lower score for every round he played. Debby says that Bob also loved music and, sometimes when she was talking with him, it was hard to tell if he was swaying to the beat of a song in his head or practicing his takeaway of the club. Bob was very competitive in golf through all stages of life. For example, not long ago, as they were having their yearly club tournament, the money was being put on Bob and his partner. Even though he hadn't been playing as much as normal, they went on to win the championship! Bob's golf buddies consisted of guys he had grown up with that still called him Bobby. They need to know what a wonderful part of his life they were.

If someone were to use a few words to describe Bob, among the highest of those would be gracious, humble and respectful, just to start. Bob would listen genuinely to what people had to say and humbly comment on the subject if he felt the need to. He didn't want or need credit for all the wonderful things he did for others. If you made friends with Bob, it is likely you were his friend for life.

Bob and Debby – they loved each other deeply. Through thick and thin, they there for one another. They lived in balance, and even though Bob would often brush off his own needs as "no big deal," Debby was always by his side. And we all know that Bob would do anything for Jonathon and he was so proud of him up to his dying day! Bob was a very good man and did his best to share his time between family, work, and friends and, if you fell into any of those categories, you were truly blessed and better for knowing him.

We will miss Bob's laugh, and his good nature, but we can find comfort knowing that on January 29th, 2026, he entered Eternal Rest with our Lord. Our faith tells us that we will be with him again.



Robert Zeiler

September 20, 1932 — January 30, 2026

Robert “Bob” Zeiler, age 93, was called home by the Lord after a long and full life devoted to family, faith, hard work and fun.

Bob was born September 20, 1932, in Brighton Colorado, the fifth child of seven and the only boy to John Zeiler Jr. and Catherine (Geringer) Zeiler.

Bob met Nance in 1954 at Bob’s cousin and Nance’s best friend’s funeral. They were married July 8, 1956, at Zion Lutheran Church in Brighton. They were blessed with four children, Alberta, Cindy, Marjorie and John.

Bob enlisted in the Army and proudly served his country in the Korean War. This experience shaped his strong sense of duty and perseverance. After his military service Robert had various jobs but most of his career he worked for Kraft Foods as a truck driver and retired with 30 years in 1995. Robert was known as Zip at work, he served as a Union Steward, was dedicated and had a strong work ethic.

Bob’s greatest pride and joy in life was his family. He raised his family at Our Savior Lutheran Church. He was very active, serving various positions in that church. Later he attended Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, and his home church was Gethsemane Lutheran at his passing. Although it was too difficult to get to church on Sunday for a few years, he always read through the bulletin and would often sing the songs of that service with his wife and later to his wife. Bob loved to sing with his family. He was always making jokes, sharing stories and having fun. He brought laughter wherever he went and left memories that will be cherished forever. Bob loved gardening and growing plants indoors. He enjoyed grafting plants together. He loved the outdoors. He was an amazing husband, daddy, grandpa, papa, brother, uncle and friend.

He is survived by his wife, Nance and children: Alberta (Dave) Somberg, Cindy Devillier, Marjorie Ginther, and John Zeiler III. He leaves behind Grandchildren: David (Wendy) Somberg, Misty (John) Ross, William (Naomi) Devillier, Tiffany Ginther, Bobby (Kerri) Ginther, John Zeiler IV, Sean Zeiler, Erica Zeiler. Great Grandchildren: Kyle (Guadalupe) Ross, Tyler Ross, Laisha Benavidez (Jeffrey)(Angel & Emilia), Kristina Gomez, Jovan Oronia, Emily Oronia, Aria Devillier, Kaiden Ginther.

He preceded in death by both his parents; son-in-law Kenneth Ginther; sisters, Helen Carlson, Marge Morris, Mildred Thaden, Ruth Jorgens, Shirley Antill, Beverly Wagner. His funeral service was held Saturday February 14, 2026, at Gethsemane Lutheran Church.

Rosalind McCarter

Rosalind grew up in Commerce City, Colorado and graduated from Adams City High School in 1971. She married her high school sweetheart Robert McCarter in 1972. She worked as an airport parking manager for many years, where she was known for her strong work ethic, leadership and dedication. She took pride in her work and built lasting relationships through her professionalism and kindness. Later in life, she made the selfless decision to retire in order to help raise her grandchildren – a role she embraced with immense love and joy. Caring for her family was not just something she did; it was who she was.



Rosalind had a special gift for nurturing - whether it was the flowers in her garden or the people she loved most. She found peace and joy working in her garden, tending each plant with patience and care. Just as she helped her flowers bloom, she helped her family grow through her guidance, encouragement, and unconditional love.

She also had a talent for crochet, creating beautiful handmade treasures for those she cherished. Every stitch was woven with love, and the blankets and keepsakes she crafted will forever be comforting reminders of her gentle and generous spirit.

She is lovingly survived by her devoted husband Robert McCarter, her daughters Angela (Josh) McBeain, Dawn (Lorenzo) Robledo; her grandchildren, Alexis, Jasmine, D'Erica, John and Zachary; her siblings, Henry Hernandez, Petra Hernandez-Reetz, Floyd (Nancy) Hernandez, and Loyd Hernandez; and many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and dear friends who were blessed to know her.

She was preceded in death by parents Felix and Mary Hernandez, sister Adel and Edward Zakrzewski, sister-in-law Marie (Abeyta) Hernandez and brother-in-law Greg Reetz.

Rosalind will be remembered for her warm heart, steady presence, and the way she made everyone feel at home. Though our hearts are broken, we find comfort knowing her love lives on in each of us. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered



FREEMAN DAVID CHAMBERS

February 5, 1953 - March 2, 2026

Freeman David "Dave" Chambers, 73, of Commerce City, CO, passed away peacefully at home March 2, 2026.

Dave grew up in Commerce City with his father, Freeman, sister Sherri, and brother Don. Dave and his brother Don started Chambers & Sons Towing in 1985. Dave enjoyed spending his time with his wife, Kris of 21 years, his sons Micheal and Luis, granddaughter Alliyah, grandsons Andrew, David, Tristan, and Wyatt. He loved spending time with all his family.

Dave was proceeded in death by his mom Amelia, father Freeman, and younger brother Don.

Dave is survived by his spouse Kris, his sons Micheal and Luis (Geraldine), granddaughter Alliyah, grandsons Andrew, David, Tristan, and Wyatt. Nieces, Brandy (Tom), Amie, and Morgan (Brandon) and many great nieces and nephews.

Frank Buschman

July 19, 1941-November 30, 2025

Richard Roy Jergensen

August 17, 1947 – February 10, 2026

Rick Jergensen was born in Denver, Colorado, on August 17, 1947. He passed away from natural causes at his home in Arvada, Colorado, on February 10, 2026. Son of Ivan Roy Jergensen and Winifred Cavnar Jergensen. He was preceded in death by his brother, Johnathan Edward Jergensen.



Rick married Raita Zigurs (Tita) on October 7, 1967. Soon after, they purchased their first home in Commerce City, Colorado, where they lived for five years and finished their respective college degrees. In May 1968, Rick and Tita started their family when their daughter Ingrid Maiga Jergensen was born.

In 1972, Rick graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder with a Bachelor of Science degree. Shortly after, he began his career as a Field Agent with Iowa National Insurance Company. Rick later joined his father Ivan at Jergensen Insurance Agency, where he would dedicate more than fifty years to their family business.

Rick and Tita's family grew in October 1974 when their son Steen Aleksandr Jergensen was born. In December of the same year, the young family relocated to Arvada, Colorado, and established their permanent residence.

Rick was involved with the Commerce City Business and Professional Association for over 10 years. He spearheaded beautification projects in his hometown to restore and improve roadway medians along industrial corridors. He advocated for and supported the inception of the Commerce City Recreation Center and actively participated in the community's fun-runs and parades. Throughout his career, Rick maintained a strong, collaborative relationship with the Independent Insurance Agents of Colorado.

Rick was an active member of the Denver Danes Club and the Rocky Mountain Thunderbird Club. There was no parallel, however, for his commitment to the Latvian community of Denver. Rick's deep love for Tita inspired him to adopt her native Latvian customs and traditions. Together, their involvement helped the Denver Latvian community flourish. An unlikely all-American outsider became a beloved, integral member of the Denver Latvian society. He participated in many nationwide Latvian song and dance festivals, solstice celebrations, holiday traditions, and traveled to Latvia with Tita often. Rick also became a leading member in the

Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denver. He served as a Church Board Member, Lay Pastor, and regularly shared his gift of music, sermons, and scripture.

Rick also had a passion and aptitude for sports, music, and the great outdoors. He was a standout three-sport athlete at Adams City High School and continued on to play baseball in college. Rick encouraged his kids to participate in multiple sports, which he also volunteered to coach. He was ever present at his children's and grandchildren's events. Rick was a longtime supporter of local sports teams and held season tickets for the CU Buffaloes, the Colorado Rockies, and the Denver Broncos. Rick also had a gift for music, playing the trumpet, piano, and his long-time love of singing and playing guitar. After learning to fly fish as a young boy, Rick shared his passion with his extended family, his children, and good friends – teaching others and making several worldwide fishing trips and expeditions.

Rick and Tita extended themselves well beyond their own immediate family. They opened their home and welcomed out-of-state family members, several international students, and a pastor from Latvia for the local Latvian Church for lengthy stays. Their generosity and spirit of giving were fundamental to their core value of serving others.

Rick is survived by his wife of 58 years, Tita, and his loving family. Siblings: Jerry Jergensen (wife Judith), Susie Ryan (husband Jim), and numerous nieces and nephews.

Children: Ingrid (husband Andris), Steen (wife Sarah).

Grandchildren: Niklavs Levensteins, Kristians Levensteins, Aleksandr Jergensen, Marisa Jergensen, Annika Jergensen, Lars Jergensen.



Lorena Gasca-Ventura

October 6, 1962 – February 8, 2026

Lorena Gasca-Ventura (Miss Lorena as she was known to the community) was a loving mother of three daughters and a caring wife of Tasty Donuts Owner Maynor Ventura. When the Ventura family took over Tasty Donuts in 2020 it was Lorena who welcomed in the customers. She would go in as early as 3am to put the final touches on donuts to sell at

5am. She trained new staff and was beloved by many in the community. Lorena was someone you could chat with for a few moments and feel like it was a lifetime. Lorena loved people, and many people loved

her. Lorena was an avid community member and often accompanied her husband to community events. She unfortunately had to step away from her work at Tasty Donuts in 2023 as she was diagnosed with Stage Four Breast Cancer. Lorena fought for three years and unfortunately succumbed to this dreadful disease in early February. Many will miss her bright smile, charming energetic personality, and warmth.

The Ventura family held Lorena's memorial service on Friday February 20th. She is survived by her husband Maynor Ventura and three daughters.

James Allen

January 30, 1935 – March 17, 2026

James Allen was born in Soperton, Georgia, on January 30, 1935. He spent his first seven years growing up on The Youngblood Plantation, working as a water boy for field workers. At the age of 7, his family migrated to Toledo, Ohio.



At the young age of 16, Mr. Allen enlisted in the United States Air Force (USAF) on August 9, 1951. Serving as a helicopter flight crew chief, he traveled the world, visiting several countries, including Japan, Spain, Germany, and many more. While stationed in Hempstead Plains, New York, he met Inez Matthews and married her on March 5, 1964. Their marriage lasted 39 years. Mrs. Inez Allen preceded him in death. He is also preceded in death by his sister Janie Alexander.

Mr. Allen is survived by their three daughters, Inez Allen, Dr. Veronica Gerace (Dr. Gerald Gerace), and Jennifer Allen-Thomas (Harvest B. Thomas III). Mr. Allen is also survived by his four grandchildren Alexandria Gerace, Dominic Gerace, Morgan Gerace, and Madison Gerace (children of Dr. Veronica and Dr. Gerald Gerace) and a host of nieces and nephews .

In addition to his family, Mr. Allen is survived by three of his dearest friends, John Sominet and Charles Aragon, both with the Denver Sheriff's Department, and Harold Hunt of the Georgia Club.

In 1962, Mr. Allen became a member of The Amazon Lodge No. 4 Masonic Lodge, in Toledo, Ohio. Mr. Allen was also a member of the Georgia Club.

After serving 20 years in the USAF, Mr. Allen retired from the military and moved to Commerce City, Colorado in May 1971. During his transition from the military, Mr. Allen earned an Associate Degree in Business from Aurora Community College.

In June 1971, Mr. Allen was hired by the Denver Sheriff's Department (DSD) where he worked for 23 years and retired in 1992. While employed with the DSD, he was promoted to Desk Sergeant and received several awards for his leadership. He is recognized as one of the Founders of the Denver Black Sheriffs Union, which still exists today.

In 1971, Mr. Allen and his wife, Mrs. Inez Allen, started a small family real estate business in which they purchased vacant lots, affordable homes, and apartments. Mr. and Mrs. Allen relocated homes to vacant lots, remodeled existing homes, and built new homes throughout Commerce City and Denver. The couple rented or sold new or newly remodeled homes to deserving families, most of whom could not qualify for traditional home loans. Throughout the years, Mr. and Mrs. Allen built, remodeled, or relocated over 40 homes in Commerce City and the surrounding area.

Mr. Allen was the first African American male elected to the Commerce City, City Council. In September 1994, he was appointed to a 6-month term on the Commerce City Council. Mr. Allen went on to win two consecutive 4-year terms as a Commerce City Councilman for Ward 4, which is now Ward 2.

While serving on the Commerce City Council, Mr. Allen was appointed to serve on the Commerce City Housing Authority. This appointment allowed him the opportunity to help garner grants, funding, and other resources for the citizens of Commerce City.

Throughout his many years of civic service, Mr. Allen was instrumental in bringing retail and chain restaurants to Commerce City. These include Walmart, McDonald's, and others. He also helped to bring the first government sponsored residential solar homes to the community and helped secure grants and other awards for the city. He played a key role in bringing new buildings and facilities to the city, including the Buffalo Run Golf Course.

In 2004, Mr. Allen was elected to a four-year term as a board member of the South Adams County Water and Sanitation District.

The Commerce City Council dedicated a new city park, The James Allen Family Park, in honor of Mr. Allen's legacy of contributions to the community.

During their free time, Mr. and Mrs. Allen enjoyed traveling, raising livestock, fishing, and spending time with their family at their mountain home.



Rinaldo James Soliz

October 28, 1952 – March 23, 2026

Rinaldo (Ron) James Soliz lived an amazing life. He was a beloved son, brother, husband, dad, grandpa, and friend. Throughout his life he was a devoted family man, helping any family or friend in need. Ron was a third-generation Colorado native. Born in Denver, Colorado to Candelario and Dorothy Soliz on October 28, 1952, he grew up with his two brothers and sisters in Commerce City, Colorado. He attended Adam City High School, where he became an accomplished wrestler and developed a love for the outdoors. Whitewater rafting, biking, and camping continued to be passions for the rest of his life.

Ron began dating the love of his life, Barbara (Barb) Kay Lenz, in high school. On September 4, 1971, Ron and Barb were married at Our Lady Mother of the Church Catholic Church in Commerce City, Colorado. Then, in October of 1971, Ron was drafted into the U.S. Army; however, Ron elected to voluntarily enlist in the U.S. Navy. He served two tours in Vietnam, including service on the USS Durham (battleship) and on the USS Providence (landing transport). Ron was awarded: a National Defense Service Medal; Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Combat Action Ribbon; and a Navy Unit Commendation Medal. Ron lived a life of service to others, always putting others before himself, and was a devoted dad. After leaving military service, Ron attended Metro State College in Denver, Colorado, receiving an associate's degree in accounting.

Ron then began careers with United Parcel Service and Federal Express. After retiring, he then served his fellow veterans by taking an administrative role with the U.S. Veteran Affairs, retiring in 2022.

Ron was a devoted father to Chad Christopher Soliz and Ryan John Soliz, serving as a tremendous role model for fatherhood and passing on a love for the outdoors. He was a proud grandfather to seven grandchildren: Tyson, Lincoln, Joseph, Christian, Caroline, Zachery, and Calvin. They remember him as making special time with each to attend performances and sporting events. He created lasting memories with each one.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents Candelario and Dorothy, as well as his brother Ernie Soliz. He is survived by his wife Barbara and two loving sons Chad (Melissa) and Ryan (Carrie), brother Ruben Soliz, sisters Rita Soliz-Marin and Patricia Soliz, and numerous nieces and nephews.

James Cedo Graffeo

September 5, 1967 - March 24, 2026

Asunta "Susie" Jean Domenico

February 14, 1940 - April 9, 2026 (86 years old)

Susie (Alonzi) Domenico, 86, of Commerce City, passed away peacefully on April 9, 2026.

Susie was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and aunt whose life was centered around her family.

She was known for her kindness, strength, and the love she shared so freely with those around her. She found her greatest joy in spending time with her loved ones, especially in the kitchen, where she expressed her love through cooking and bringing everyone together around the table.

She is lovingly survived by her husband, Michael Domenico; her daughter, Mary (Trent) Younger, her son, Dino (Kim) Domenico; her grandchildren, Travis Younger, Mia (Tyrese) Tubaya, and Luke Domenico; her great-granddaughter, Rylan Tubaya; and several loving nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Jack and Mary Alonzi; her siblings, Angelina Faliano, Arthur Alonzi, Anthony Alonzi, Elwood Alonzi; and her twin brother, Jack Alonzi.

Susie will be deeply missed and forever remembered for her warmth, compassion, and unwavering love for her family. Her greatest legacy is the love she gave, which will continue through her family for generations to come



WHY JOIN THE COMMERCE CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY...

- To learn and understand the history of the community in which you live.
- To help preserve the history in the community in which you live for future generations.
- Meet new people.
- Be involved with the community.
- Attend events sponsored by the historical society.
- Get involved in helping the historical society educate people about the history.
- Volunteer opportunities to help preserve your history.
- Gain appreciation for where you live.



Membership Application

Commerce City Historical Society

Application for Membership

	NAME: _____
	Address: _____ _____
	Phone Number: _____ home _____ cell _____
	E-Mail _____
	Business Name _____

Annual Dues

***Please make checks payable to: Commerce City Historical Society,
6505 E. 60th Avenue, Commerce City, Colorado 80022***

Individual	\$20.00	_____ (per year)
Family	\$30.00	_____ (per year)
Memorial	\$50.00	_____ (per year)
Business/Corporation	\$100.00	_____ (per year)
Life Membership	\$500.00	_____ (one time)
Senior Lifetime Membership (Age 65 Plus)	\$250.00	_____ (one time)

Are you a Veteran? Yes___ No___ What Branch? _____

DATE PAID _____

How would you like to be notified of meetings and the Newsletter?

Email Phone Mail

For questions, please call the museum office 303-288-2590

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Calls _____
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