

## Alvin & Gladys Brock

This week we are happy to name Alvin and Gladys Brock as the 114th and 115th inductees in Marshfield's 150: Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present register. The Brocks were nominated on behalf of their children by Carrie Ably and Margie Schmidt.

Alvin and Gladys Brock established Melody Gardens Skateland on South Oak Avenue in November 1974 -- creating a modern space for both kids and adults to stay active, learn new skating skills, and gather for fun with friends and family the year-round.



At that time Marshfield had an older roller skating rink in the pavilion at Wildwood Park. It operated about six months each year, spring through fall, but growing concerns over safety issues and the expense of caring for an aging building was threatening its continued use as a skating rink.

Recognizing the opportunity to fulfill Al's longtime dream of owning and operating a roller rink, he and Gladys spent the winter of 1973/1974 traveling to some of the biggest and best regional rinks studying what it might take to for them to bring a new skating facility to Marshfield.

Armed with all they had learned, their likes and dislikes, they designed and built Melody Gardens Skateland, an 85-by-190-foot building capable of accommodating about 700 roller skaters. Inside it featured a 68-by-132-foot epoxy-coated skating area, a snack bar and lounging area. Aside from the skating surface, floors, as well as walls, were fully carpeted. Music was piped into 73 ceiling speakers located throughout the building.

Community members were invited to an open house on Friday, November 8, 1974 to walk through and inspect the new building and then the next day, the rink opened for skating.

Gladys was the ever present smiling face in the ticket office, setting aside her crafty crocheting to greet everyone and promptly buzz them through the door. While Alvin was always handing out skates, adjusting them as needed and making sure the rink was a friendly, safe, fun place for people of all ages.

Apparently, the skating rink was not enough to keep Alvin, Gladys and their family busy. In 1980 they remodeled the existing building and added an ice cream parlor, renaming the

business Melody Gardens Skateland and Ice Cream Parlor. Their daughter, Debra, managed the Parlor, which featured 16 flavors of ice cream. The menu included a variety of ice-cream treats, pizza, soup and sandwiches.

Ten years later, the Brock's again remodeled the existing building to make the ice cream parlor into a full-service restaurant and Melody Gardens Restaurant and Skateland was established! With the help of their 16 children Al and Gladys owned and operated the rink until 1993. At that time, they sold the business to their daughter and son-in-law, Debra and Dan Dietel.

In 1996, Deb and Dan added an area where they began making their own special recipe homemade ice cream. Making their own ice cream was related to Alvin's love of a good scoop of ice cream. Today, Melody Gardens continues making good handmade ice cream in a variety of flavors.

Deb and Dan operated Melody Gardens until 2012 when they sold the business to her sister, Margie, and her husband, Dennis Schmidt. Margie and Dennis continue the tradition of providing great food and fun entertainment to the many individuals and families who have come through the doors of Melody Gardens -- and the ensuing friendships that continue to this day.

The limbo song and shag carpet are etched in everyone's memory and romances began with a simple couple skate. Customers visit often enough to pick out their favorite menu item, favorite ice cream flavor and favorite place to sit.

The friendships and memories made at Melody Gardens will forever hold a special place in the hearts of Alvin and Gladys and their children, all of whom have been a staple in the roller skating and restaurant business throughout the years. The siblings are now proudly passing the tradition onto their children and grandchildren.

"The next skate will be an all skate."