

Arlene Ahlbrandt, Author and Educator

Her Legacy: a passion for sharing history and for education

Arlene Briggs was born in Fort Collins in 1930. She grew up alongside her twin sister, Darlene, at 232 Pine Street in downtown Fort Collins. Arlene attended Saint Joseph's Catholic School, graduated from Fort Collins High School in 1949, and then attended Colorado State Teachers College (now the University of Northern Colorado) in Greeley, to receive her elementary teaching degree. She taught kindergarten in Limon, Colorado, for a year before returning to Fort Collins to teach at Harris Elementary School. In 1953, Arlene married Harry Ahlbrandt and they settled in Fort Collins, where they raised three children.

After Arlene retired from teaching, her passion became local history. She wrote books about the early history of downtown Fort Collins, Larimer County, and the Wellington Box Elder area, as well as contributing a number of photographs. Books she wrote include *Annie the Railroad Dog*, *101 Memorable Men of Northern Colorado* and *101 Memorable Women of Northern Colorado*. She also collaborated with Kathryn Stieben on compiling and editing an updated *History of Larimer County Volume II*.

Her greatest desire was to assure that the unique local history of Fort Collins never be lost or forgotten. She shared many stories about the buildings and people that influenced downtown Fort Collins.

Later, in her third act of life, Arlene and Harry developed a passion for travel. After their travels she would always come home with a greater knowledge about the local history of where they had vacationed.

Arlene died on October 7, 2010 in Fort Collins, leaving a lasting legacy of collected stories and memories.

"History will be lost forever if not written or recorded."

Written by Barbara Fleming, Author, Coloradoan Columnist and Living Her Legacy Wordsmith