

History of the Donald M. Smith Memorial Pool

In 1972, Donald M. Smith – who was the Chillicothe Gazette’s publisher and, at the time, the president of the Chillicothe Noon Rotary Club – encouraged both the Rotary Club and the city to construct the pool in Yoctangee Park. He doggedly built consensus and raised the money to get it built and provide area youth with a wholesome recreational activity in the summer months.

In 1975, the City of Chillicothe opened its municipal swimming pool.

A few years later, the city decided to honor Smith for his hard work. In the years since, the Donald M. Smith Memorial Pool has provided a summer job, a respite from the summer heat and a great deal of fun for many young people in Ross County. Many local children learned to swim in its waters and, even today, people of all ages use the pool for recreation and to live a more active lifestyle.

In 1991, the city added a 159-foot twisting slide and Hillary Davis, of Clarksburg, won a contest to name the slide, submitting “Wet and Wild.”

Not only have city residents enjoyed the pool, but the business community has always supported it financially as well. Among the businesses that have contributed to the pool’s continued upkeep are: The Chillicothe Gazette (through the Gannett Foundation), Wear-Ever, Mead Corp., Citizens National Bank, Adena Health System and the various companies that have done work at the former uranium enrichment plant in Piketon. Many of the city’s service organizations, churches and clubs have also helped to keep the pool filled of water and fun each year.

Past pool managers include Chuck Wallace, George Comstock, Bill Bonner, Pam Allen, Jim Fender and Dana Cousins.