

Tara Templeman 0:00

All right, my name is Tara Templeman, I'm the museum supervisor here at the Broomfield Depot Museum and today I'm here with Bette Erickson Mayor Pro Tem.

Bette Erickson 0:09

Hi. Hi, Tara. Thanks for having me.

Tara Templeman 0:12

Thanks for coming. I'm excited to interview you. First question is when did you move to Broomfield and why?

Bette Erickson 0:20

My husband now deceased my husband Paul Beatty and I moved to Broomfield in 1984. We got priced out of Boulder. I was working in Denver, and he was working in Boulder and we wanted a place to raise our newborn and a family and we liked the community of Broomfield in the real estate prices in Broomfield in 1984.

Tara Templeman 0:46

Absolutely, it seems like a lot of people moved to Broomfield for exactly that reason it's a cheaper than Boulder and it's kind of in between Boulder and Denver.

Bette Erickson 0:54

Right.

Tara Templeman 0:55

All right. What is your best memory of Broomfield?

Bette Erickson 0:59

Oh, Tara There are way too many to single one out

Tara Templeman 1:03

You can tell a couple of stories

Bette Erickson 1:04

Always Broomfield Days, always Broomfield Days. The first Broomfield Days we came upon and I say came upon because we were out walking our three week old baby girl. And we had a three year old son, and we went for a walk. And we stumbled upon a celebration on Midway Boulevard. It was Broomfield Days, we sat on the curb, and watched that community celebration and oh, we loved it. And we went back every year. So Broomfield Days is just one of my best memories, something I look forward to every September. Oh, another memory of Broomfield Oh, my husband coaching Little League. We just love the youth sports in Broomfield.

Tara Templeman 1:50

When did he do that? For how long?

Bette Erickson 1:52

Oh, when our son and daughter he coached girls softball and our son's softball in the late 80s and early 90s. Mm hmm. Yeah, I'm trying to think of another memory. Oh, just. I just feel so lucky that we came to Broomfield and chose Broomfield to raise our family. I grew up in Michigan and my husband grew up in Boulder. And Broomfield was where we created our our life and our family.

Tara Templeman 2:24

We're lucky that you chose Broomfield

Bette Erickson 2:27

Oh, thank you, Tara.

Tara Templeman 2:29

Do you remember any significant people or events,

Unknown Speaker 2:33

significant people or events in Broomfield? Chief Deland Tom Deland, I remember when he was a young police officer, and he went on to become our police chief, and what a great police chief, and our mayor now deceased Bill Berens and that's when I became involved in city council during the transition from a city to a county in between 1998 and 2001. The the amendment, constitutional amendment, passed in 1998. And then we had three years to prepare to become a county and we became a county November 15 2001. And in that time, between 1998 and 2001, we had to set up county services a sheriff, a Health and Human Services Department. And a number of different departments. That was a significant event and I'm glad that I was a witness to that. And the big rainstorm of Broomfield Days one year I think it was probably 1996. Broomfield Days had a huge windstorm in a rainstorm in it to shut down the carnival. Tents were blowing all over the place, and my kids were just about at the age where they could do Broomfield Days by themselves. So we went home and we had a 10 year old and a 13 year old wandering around Broomfield Days with her bicycle in a rainstorm. That was a memorable Broomfield Days a significant event and more recently, September 2013, the 100 year flood or 1000 year flood. And that was, was a miracle of nature, kind of a life changing event. Fortunately, my yard didn't get flooded too much. My roof held up, but that was a huge rainstorm.

Tara Templeman 4:28

Absolutely.

Bette Erickson 4:30

You remember it?

Tara Templeman 4:31

That was right before I moved here.

Bette Erickson 4:33

Oh, and you still moved here?

Tara Templeman 4:35

I did. Describe your neighborhood.

Bette Erickson 4:40

I live in the Outlook. It said it was a new trendy, wonderful neighborhood in 1990, 1992. It's a subdivision in the north part of Broomfield not as North as Anthem or Wild Grass, but it's at the crossroads of Main Street and 136th by the water tower. Back then, when we moved there we built our house in 1992. On our on Snowmass circle right off of Outlook trail, the Outlook has beautiful views of Ruth Roberts Open Space and 287. So we didn't have an Outlook Park, a play park, and so some of the children in the neighborhood put together a petition in 1993 and went to city council and presented a petition saying "we want a park" and it was Outlook Park. And it's a nice it's a nice park in the neighborhood. The Outlook has about 350 single family homes and there's no outlet out out streets. I don't know how else to put it. There's two streets going in. And then they circle around, circle around, goes down into Crystal Pines and then comes back out. So there's two entrances and exits on Powderhorn Trail and Outlook Trail and I'm told that it's a either a police officers nightmare or blessing because if there's, you know, a chase, a car chase, well, they can block both entrances and get the get the car chase controlled. But it's a great neighborhood. And it was a wonderful how lucky we were to raise our children at the Outlook.

Tara Templeman 6:18

I hope you never have to find out about the car chase.

Bette Erickson 6:20

Right? Yeah, so it's been a number of years almost 92 Yeah, almost 30 years. No. Broomfield is a pretty safe community.

Tara Templeman 6:30

Absolutely.

Bette Erickson 6:31

Yeah.

Tara Templeman 6:35

So doesn't sound like you went to school here, but your children did.

Bette Erickson 6:38

Oh, yeah.

Tara Templeman 6:39

Describe their experiences and if they keep in touch with any of their classmates,

Bette Erickson 6:44

I don't know if they keep in touch with any of their classmates. Oh, yes. Yes, yes. So they went to Kohl school, then Broomfield Heights Middle School, then Broomfield High School, and my son. My husband did Boy Scouts and my daughter did Girl Scouts and I was the Girl Scout leader at Kohl School. When the girls were in second, third, fourth grade. I still keep in touch with one of my little girl scouts. Her name is Kathy Mc-, Kate MacDonald. And I remember and she's my she was my daughter's best friend. And she was a maid of honor at my daughter's wedding. And Kate McDonald was a handful and she lives in Broomfield, I could get her to do an interview.

Tara Templeman 7:22

Please do

Bette Erickson 7:23

I will, I'll let her know. So Kate would come to Girl Scout she was such a handful. I remember looking when, you know, assemble my girl scouts have a project ready and she'd walk in and my heart would go, Oh, she showed up. She was such a high maintenance little girl. To this day. We are best friends. We traveled together. We hike together and she's a young woman about 30. But and when we're out together, we introduce each other Kate will say this is my Girl Scout leader from second grade. So I tried to be a part of my children's peers, their friends, so we'd have them over we'd bake brownies we'd Yeah, I think it's important as a parent that you show your children you're paying attention and you care about the kids that hang out with. So I guess my son hangs out with a friend from high school. Occasionally they they cross paths. Broomfield is just such a great place to raise kids. My daughter has traveled all over the world, did an internship in Moscow, Denmark, Seattle. And I said, when you get ready to get married and have children, please come back to Broomfield, please, please. And she said, Oh, I will, Mom Broomfield is a great place to raise kids. Yes, yes, yes. Even Even the kids know what a great life they had in Broomfield.

Tara Templeman 8:46

What job or jobs have you had in Broomfield or the surrounding area?

Bette Erickson 8:51

Well, uh, my most memorable job I still have I'm Mayor Pro Tem for the city and county of Broomfield. And we're now currently about 67,000 in population and as you know, Tara, we're 33 square miles. So in 2001, I was elected to Broomfield City Council, and I voted for term limits, I'm in favor of term limits. I served from 2001 to 2004. And or 2005, a four year term, and then was reelected 2005 to 2009. And in that time, we set up a number of city services because we were just beginning to become a county and we created Broomfield County Commons Park, Paul Derda Rec Center, the Health and Human Services building, just a number of amenities in in Broomfield. And then I termed out in 2009 and I sat out for six years, and in that time, I became an empty nester and my husband Paul Beatty died. And I came back in 2015 Because

when you're termed out you have to sit out a term and then come back into 2015 I came back and I was welcomed back. It was just wonderful. I felt like what do I really like to do what feeds my soul? And being a public servant or, you know, a member of the City Council really fits me. Well, I feel like I can attend to people's needs. I feel like I'm a good listener. I love being on City Council. So in 2015, I came back and it's now been three years. That's my favorite job in Broomfield. I'm a freelance writer. So I write for newspapers and magazines, and I've written for the Broomfielder magazine, continue to write for that publication and the Broomfield enterprise. I write a hike of the week column. I've written six hiking books for Boulder, the Front Range and Rocky Mountain National Park. I write a weekly hiking column and sometimes stories in magazines about hiking. So Broomfield has really treated me well.

Tara Templeman 11:05  
For a lot of different jobs.

Bette Erickson 11:06  
It really is. Yeah, kind of a patchwork quilt.

Tara Templeman 11:13  
What do or have you done for entertainment in Broomfield or the surrounding areas?

Bette Erickson 11:18  
Hiking? People wouldn't believe but there's a lot of nice hiking opportunities in Broomfield. We have about 281 miles of trails and 250 miles of paved streets. We're a unique municipality in that we have more trails, miles of trails and we have paved streets. Mostly I hike and walk my dog. I have a beautiful little rescue dog, not little, 80 pound cattle dog, Dallas, and we hike around the area. There's wonderful trails all around the area. Did you know that there are parks in the City and County of Broomfield? There's a park within a mile of every residence in Broomfield Yes, yes, it's now a national initiative. It's called getting children in nature. But Broomfield was way ahead of it years ago, decades ago. They wanted Broomfield residents, apartments, as well as single family homes to have a designated green space or a park within a 10 minute walk or a 15 minute walk. That's about a mile. So there's just too many beautiful parks for me to mention Central Park, Sienna Park, Outlook Park, Josh's Pond, McKay Park, my entertainment options in Broomfield always include outside time.

Tara Templeman 12:40  
That's great. I had no idea that everyone lived within a mile.

Bette Erickson 12:43  
Oh, yes, yes.

Tara Templeman 12:44  
Fantastic

Bette Erickson 12:44

Where do you live?

Tara Templeman 12:45

Well, I just moved. I was living in Loc Amora so I would go to Josh's pond all the time.

Bette Erickson 12:50

Yes, Josh is pond. Yeah. There's a history of Josh's pond, you know that.

Tara Templeman 12:55

I know some of the history.

Bette Erickson 12:56

The little boy. The little boy, it was named for a little boy who loved to hang out at Josh's pond.  
Yeah

Tara Templeman 13:03

What groups or organizations do you participate in? Or have you participated in?

Bette Erickson 13:08

Stop it? I'm on City Council. Are you kidding me? I'm on like 15 committees. And well, I'm a member of the Broomfield Depot Museum Friends. So Health and Human Services Advisory Committee, I'm on a national organization, National League of Cities Institute for Youth Education and Families. It's an advocacy lobbying group on behalf of families and children. Open space and trails Advisory Committee. There's a Broomfield open space foundation that is independent of the city that, you know, it's always looking for citizen volunteers, citizen participation, it's not building trails, the Broomfield Open Space Foundation, advocates, advocates, good safety, environmental stewardship, so I encourage others to get involved with that. What others that I'm really pleased to be a part of. You know, if a Broomfield resident wants to get involved, there are many, many, many opportunities to get involved. Just go to [broomfield.org](http://broomfield.org). And, you know, search volunteer opportunities.

Tara Templeman 14:29

That's true. I think there's too many to select from.

Bette Erickson 14:33

Oh, my gosh, right, right. compulsively busy.

Tara Templeman 14:37

Yes. How has Broomfield changed since you moved here?

Bette Erickson 14:43

Let's see. 1984. traffic traffic traffic. Yeah, traffic is tough. You know if there's anything that citizens can hold elected officials accountable for it's traffic, the ease of getting around, you know, They have a right, citizens have a right to hold their elected officials accountable for their

lack of ability to get around. We owe it to our citizens to make our streets safe and accessible. And passable. And so traffic has been tough. We are and housing prices are outpacing salaries. So salaries are not keeping pace with construction costs. And so the lack of attainable housing in Broomfield is troublesome. And I hope that we can see make some changes in that. We now have a mall. We didn't have a mall. I never missed it because I'm not much of a shopper. But the mall came came about in about 2000. Many, many more families, younger, I'm no longer mainstream. I am way on the older edge. That median age of Broomfield is 37. I haven't been 37 for decades. So that's changed. I love our new I love our community. I love everything about the community. I love the growth. I love the changes. I love how history evolves

Tara Templeman 16:13

Yes. A lot of people have commented that even though Broomfield has changed so rapidly and even the demographics are changing. It still has that community feeling.

Bette Erickson 16:22

You know why? Tara, I'm glad you brought that up. The reason it has that community feeling is because I think the mayor and the Mayor Pro Tem and City Council and city staff make themselves available. So if there's a neighborhood party, or there's an organization having a gathering, a park, you know, they make themselves available. That makes even a large community feel cozy and small town when the mayor shows up or an elected official. They say that in National League of Cities, categorizes a big town a large town is 55,000 or over. So indeed, Broomfield is a large town. But it doesn't feel that way, partly because of the involvement of elected officials showing up at events. And partly because of our 33 square miles, it still really is a small, you know, you can drive from one end of the, or bicycle from one end of the city to the other and you know, a matter of hours or minutes.

Tara Templeman 17:21

How do you hope Broomfield will change in the future.

Bette Erickson 17:24

We've been undergoing a transformation in Broomfield that I'm not really fond of. And it's it's oil and gas has been invading our city, the the fracking. The I'm I'm all for oil and gas, I drive an SUV, I use natural gas to heat my home. I'm not anti oil and gas. But the fracking has really put a wedge in our community and some people who are exposed to potentially seen the fracking activity within a mile of their home. It's bothersome, it's scary and it's bothersome, and people are angry. And I could say rightly so. But there's ways to tackle a problem and there's ways to not tackle a problem. And name calling and blaming and lawsuits is not a way to tackle a problem, Coming together, seeking common ground, seeking solutions that work for everybody is a way to tackle a problem. So how do you hope Broomfield will change in the future? I hope that people will go back and remember the the Broomfield Way before the Broomfield Way was hijacked the name. Broomfield Way, the Broomfield Way truly is finding common solutions, and working together.

Tara Templeman 18:47

That's great. And it's so important to have people in leadership positions who believe that thank you.

Bette Erickson 18:52

Yeah, right.

Tara Templeman 18:54

So, at the end, is there anything I haven't asked you about that you would like to talk about or any Broomfield stories you'd like to tell?

Bette Erickson 19:01

Hmm, you know, Ginger Ramsey has been a longtime principal at Broomfield High School. She is a community asset. The Broomfield High School Eagles, I didn't go there. My husband didn't go there. But my kids went there and I think they have really good memories of, of Broomfield High School. I don't think there's anything that you left the wonderful questions and I thank you for the opportunity to do this. To participate with you in this. You know, of course, Tara, I will drive home and I will think of four more things I wish I would have said. I can't think of anything right now. I love Broomfield.

Tara Templeman 19:41

Wonderful place to live and if you think of anything else, you could always come back in.

Bette Erickson 19:45

Thank you so much, Tara.

Tara Templeman 19:46

Thank you

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