

# Donors' Wall

On February 1, 1974 the combined Bicentennial Committees of the City of Joliet and the County of Will formed the Will-Joliet Bicentennial Park, Incorporation. One of the main purposes of this Corporation was to obtain this historic piece of property on Bluff Street and build a park on it as a lasting memorial in honor of our great nation's two hundredth birthday in 1976.

The Corporation was successful in obtaining five and one-third acres between Western (Cross) Avenue and Jefferson (Exchange) Street of what had been Joliet's first street (Bluff) in the 1830's. This was the first piece of three pieces that the Corporation obtained, thus making it a ten-and-one-half-acre park.

The Corporation planned the Park to include an indoor intimate theatre for three hundred and an outdoor bandshell, which could accommodate several thousand. The Corporation raised the funds to start construction, knowing that the additional funds would be needed to complete the complex. Many committees were formed and fund raising was conducted throughout the County.

The idea of the Donors' Wall in the lobby of the theatre/bandshell complex was conceived at a WJBP, Inc. executive board meeting consisting of President Mrs. William C. Limacher, Treasurer John G. Whyte and Secretary Boyd R. Bucher. The first plaque to go on the Donors' Wall was the large bronze plaque that named our first large donors (\$5,000 to \$75,000) who enabled us to start construction.

The Corporation also decided that "gold bricks" would be sold for at least one thousand dollars each, and that those donors' names would be engraved on individual bricks and placed permanently on the Donors' Wall. Due to the generosity of some of our donors, anonymous contributions for gold bricks have been sold for one thousand to ten thousand dollars.

A special plaque has been placed on the wall remembering Arthur J. Smith's 1994 legacy of \$600,000.00, which was to be used for the Park at the corporation's discretion.

Today we are grateful to those who continue to buy gold bricks for our Donors' Wall. We are indebted to them and to all of the Donors who believe this historic piece of land and its facilities should be saved, and we pledge to continue to serve and provide affordable entertainment for all.