



Golden Landmarks Association  
*Preserving Our Past, Protecting Our Future*

## **Living Landmark Award 2009 Hal & Helen Leith**

**H**al was born in Butte, Montana in 1919. Helen was born in Hollywood, California in 1924. They met 66 years ago at Camp Santa Anita, California when Hal was a GI and Helen was a USO hostess. Xavier Cougat and his band played that night, and Hal taught Helen how to rhumba. They married a year later in Alhambra, CA, and the rest, as they say, is history.

**H**al retired in 1974, after living on the island of Saipan, Tehran, Iran, Djakarta, Indonesia, and Karachi, Pakistan as a family with four children. With Helen keeping the home fires burning, and Hal traveling all over the world, it was time for a more settled life. The Leiths moved to Golden in 1976, following the footsteps of Hal's great-grandparents, who had emigrated in the 1860's and 1870's. Actually, their move to Golden stemmed not from a desire to return to his roots, but because Hal wanted to ski. Golden provided a perfect place for them to both work and enjoy the mountains and outdoor recreation. And so, Hal accepted a teaching position at Metro State, and Helen went to work at State Farm.

**S**ince coming to Golden, Helen and Hal have been very involved in the social and civic life of our community by contributing their time and efforts to a variety of causes. Helen served on the board of directors for the Jefferson Symphony Orchestra for 13 years, and was the originator of the very popular duck race during Buffalo Bill Days. Art lovers will remember her smiling face at the Foothills Art Center for the last 25 years, where she served as a receptionist one day a week. She remains very active in the Golden Cultural Alliance and both she and Hal are the Sweethearts liaisons during February's Heart and Soul Month. The Golden Family of Churches welcomes their energy and participation in feeding homeless families on a regular basis, as well as other service projects.

**S**ince the early 1970's, Hal has been very active in Winter Park's Disabled Skier program. At their request, he was able to draw on his facility with languages to learn American Sign Language, and used that new skill and a deep well of patience to teach deaf skiers to enjoy skiing and other outdoor activities. As a long-time member of the Golden Optimists, one of Hal's pet projects has been to provide hearing aids for the needy. He collects them when they are no longer needed, and raises money for repair through the Optimists before distributing them to those who would not otherwise be able to afford them. Since arriving in Golden, the couple has been very active in the International Student Program at CSM, and has befriended many foreign students, helping them to learn about and appreciate their new home.

**T**he Leiths were honored as Golden's Sweethearts during Heart and Soul Month, February 1999, and Grand Marshals for Buffalo Bill Days in 2007.