

Mayor A.E. (Bud) Ellison-Lehi's 39th Mayor 1982

By Richard Van Wagoner

The local political atmosphere during the fall of 1981 made for one of the more colorful partisan's vacated mayorship on a ballot that did not list party affiliation. One of them, JoAnn Brown, was the first and only woman to run for mayor. Surprisingly, also for the first time in Lehi history, and independent mayoralty candidate won the election, with Brown coming in a close second.

During the Democrat caucus, attended by less than thirty people, local chairman Ted Comer told the group that the elections were wide open to any citizen who wished to pay the ten dollar filing fee. He predicted that a mayoralty candidate could achieve success with perhaps just twenty-five percent of the vote. city council member JoAnn Brown, also serving as temporary Lehi City Recorder, was then nominated as the Democrat's mayoralty candidate. Wayne Carlton and Carl (Blackie) harris were named to see the two vacant city council positions.

Meanwhile, across town in the Little Theatre at the high school, the Progressive Party, represented by just forty-two persons, voted to support Gill Van Wagoner for mayor along with council hopefuls Chris Lend and Frank Comer.

Independent candidates, who also announced their intent to run for mayor included: Michael J. (Mick) Elkins, A. E. (Bud) Ellison, Julian Mercer, and L. Richard Smith. Winners of the election, were Bud Ellison and new city councilmen Wayne Carlton and Chris Lind.

Mayor-elect Arthur Earl Ellison, a relatively newcomer to Lehi, had made himself known to voters through full-page advertisements in the "Lehi Free Press", huge signs throughout the community, and considerable door-to-door lobbying. Campaigning under the slogan "Let's Make Lehi the Most Vibrant Community in the Nation," Ellison asked voters: "Let me contribute 30 years of sound, hands on management experience to all of you in Lehi, to apply as you deem necessary, for

the collective benefit of all.”

Mayor Ellison, born and raised in Nephi, Utah, was the eldest son of Fern and Henry Worthen. After graduating from Juab High School, he served in the U.S. Navy, as a Chief Petty Officer, during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He moved to Lehi in 1975 after marrying Anna June Southwick, and at the time of his election was vice-president and corporate manager of Tech West, Inc., a Salt Lake City-based engineering firm.

As managing representative of major engineering and constructive firms for more than three decades, Bud had traveled the world working in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, Canada, Indonesia, Australia, South America and the Middle East. He was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the Society of American Military Engineers, the Society of Mining Engineers of AIME, and the National Geographic Society.

One of the first items of business, Mayor Ellison attended to was the appointment of California native William S. Gibbs as Lehi's new chief of police. Considerable emphasis was also directed towards cleaning up blighted areas about the community. An extensive organizational flow chart was developed by the mayor as well as his administration bringing Lehi City Corporation into compliance with the 1981 modification of the Utah Annotated Code.

On July 15, 1982, 195 days into his term, Mayor Ellison surprised the city by tendering a letter of resignation which stated in Part: “The culmination of recent events affecting my private, personal and professional life dictate resignation, to be in effect at 12:01 a.m. the 16th day of July 1982.” Expanding on his decision elsewhere, the former mayor, recently employed by the Intermountain Power agency as a construction supervisor, lamented, “I'm working myself to death. The resignation had nothing to do with IPA, it's just that there aren't enough hours to accomplish all that I have to do for Lehi City.” The mayorship “shouldn't be a part time job,” he observed, “the city needs a full time mayor.” Within days, the city council replaced Mayor Ellison with Garry Sampson, a member of the council.

In the fall of 1985, Ellison was again renominated by the Progressive Party as its mayoralty candidate. Further explaining his earlier resignation the former mayor related that during early May 1982, the executive officer of Intermountain Power Agency spoke with him about the position of construction advisor on the huge generating plant then under construction at Delta. He was hired by the agency as a full-time employee on May 21, 1982. In early July, he was informed that because Lehi City was a participant in the power sales contract with IPA he was in a conflict of interest position.

Force to resign either his mayorship or employment with IPA, Ellison because of financial considerations, ceded his position with lehi City. On August 27, 1985, IPA granted him a clearance which removed the conflict-of-interest problem.

Former Mayor Ellison was not successful in his bid to upset popular incumbent Mayor George Tripp. In 1987 he retired from the Intermountain Power Agency. He and Anna June currently migrate with the seasons between their residences in Lehi and St. George. While Mayor, Ellison's term was brief, Lehi citizens are indebted to him for his service to our community. His contributions, along with councilmen Garry Sampson, John Haws, Joseph Shelton, Chris Lind and Wayne Carlton, certainly helped to enhance their campaign slogan: -"Lehi-the Best Place to Be."