**Our Friend of Hart Park, Elliott McGrew**

by Sheila Miller, FHOP Director/Secretary

This year at the FOHP Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Annual Meeting, Elliott McGrew was honored for his years of volunteer work both as a Hart Volunteer and Director and also for his years of volunteering at the Autry Museum. A special award was presented to Elliott on behalf of County Supervisor Mike Antonovich. The presentation was made by Dave Perry, Deputy for Mr. Antonovich. Elliott was also awarded certificates from the City of Santa Clarita and from the FOHP, which were presented by Board President Laurene Weste. This month we are featuring Elliott in our newsletter to tell you a little more about the man who has been such an inspiration to all of us here at Hart Park.

Elliott Brooks McGrew Jr. was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the older of two sons born to Elliott Brooks McGrew Sr. and Helen (Beltz) McGrew.

At about the age of three the family moved on to New Jersey and later to New York. Elliott started out his education by attending the public schools in New Jersey and White Plains, New York. After service in the U.S. Marines, he went on to graduate from Washington Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, which was an all male school at the time. He then attended the University of Connecticut where he got his MA degree in English. After teaching for two years at Deerfield Academy in Deerfield Massachusetts, he continued his education to get a PHD in American Studies at the University of Minnesota.

It was while he was working on getting his PHD at the University of Minnesota that Elliott fell in love with his future bride Elinor Huggenvik, a lovely lady of Norwegian ancestry and a first generation American. Both worked in the office of the Dean of Students at the University of Minnesota while attending graduate school.

In 1956 Elliott and Elinor were married at St. Olaf College in Northfield Minnesota. They were married by Elinor's father who was head of the Religion Department at St. Olaf and her brother, who was also a Lutheran minister.

Two years after they married they left the University of Minnesota and moved to Lakeville, Connecticut where Elliott taught English for seven years.

He then accepted a position in Greece where he served as principal at Athens College for seven years. They moved to California in 1997 where Elliott taught at the Harvard School in Studio City, and later at the Campbell Hall School. With a friend, Elinor founded the Creative Years Nursery School, which they co-directed for 14 years.

Elliott and his lovely bride "Miss Elinor" have been married for 57 years, certainly an inspiration for the rest of us. They have two daughters: Rebecca who lives in Altadena, and Kaite who lives in Santa Cruz, CA. Elliott and Elinor McGrew chose to celebrate their Golden Anniversary in 2006 with a dinner engagement right here in Hart Park at the William S. Hart Hall with family and friends present to help with the celebration.

Elliott came to Hart after a group of our volunteers took a field trip to the Autry Museum on Feb 17, 2001 and Elliott was our docent tour guide for the day. He liked us and we liked him and the rest, as they say, is history. Shortly thereafter Elliott became a Hart Volunteer and continued to stay on as a volunteer at the Autry as well. Elliott became an FOHP Board Member when former board member Gene Taylor ask him to accept the position. Elliott chaired the Silents Under the Stars event for three years and later helmed the job of editor in chief of our newsletter.

Both Elliott and Elinor have been active volunteers for many years and they also volunteer and are very active at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Santa Clarita where they are members, and where Elliott served on the board of directors.

Elliott retired from the FOHP board this past year and we wish him the very best. He will always be a member of the Hart Family and we hope he and the lovely "Miss Elinor" will visit us often.