

= Keller Fountain Park =

Keller Fountain Park is a city park in downtown Portland , Oregon . Originally named Forecourt Fountain or Auditorium Forecourt , the 0 @. @ 92 @-@ acre (0 @. @ 37 ha) park opened in 1970 across Third Avenue from what was then Civic Auditorium . In 1978 , the park was renamed after Ira Keller , head of the Portland Development Commission (PDC) from 1958 ? 1972 . Civic Auditorium was renamed as Keller Auditorium in 2000 , but is named in honor of Richard B. Keller .

The central feature of the park is the concrete water fountain . Keller Fountain is often noted as a memorable feature of the public landscape in downtown Portland , and in 1999 was awarded a medallion from the American Society of Landscape Architects . The fountain was designed by Angela Danadjieva using inspiration from waterfalls in the Columbia River Gorge located east of Portland . While the park is named Keller Fountain Park , the fountain itself is named Ira Keller Fountain . The fountain 's pools hold 75 @, @ 000 US gallons (280 @, @ 000 l ; 62 @, @ 000 imp gal) of water , while the waterfalls pump 13 @, @ 000 US gallons (49 @, @ 000 l ; 11 @, @ 000 imp gal) per minute over the cascade .

= = History = =

Prior to being a park , the block was the location of a popular tavern run by Bud Clark , who was later to become a mayor of Portland . Clark purchased the tavern formerly known as " Dot Tavern " for \$ 1 @, @ 600 , including acquisition of the lease for the building . Clark renamed it the Spatenhaus and it was reopened in October 1962 . As the area was already part of the South Auditorium urban renewal area , Clark lost the lease when the PDC acquired the block in May 1967 . The firm of Skidmore , Owings and Merrill was then asked by PDC to draw plans for the park , which foresaw a fountain , a traffic turnaround , and underground parking for 150 cars . Protests were raised however , by Walter Gordon , the architectural adviser to the PDC , and in July 1968 the Lawrence Halprin design firm was commissioned in to design the park , partly due to Gordon 's advocacy .

Angela Danadjieva , a designer at Lawrence Halprin & Associates , was charged with the artistic conception . Danadjieva began her career in design with work on Constructivist set designs for the Bulgarian State Film agency . In the early 1960s she defected to Paris and studied at the École des Beaux Arts , and then emigrating to the United States towards the end of the decade . She took her inspiration from a book on waterfalls of the Columbia River Gorge , which was given to her by Ira Keller at the design studio . It was built by the Schrader Construction Company for \$ 512 @, @ 000 .

The plaza was dedicated on June 23 , 1970 by Halprin who called for the people of Portland to come together , referring to the Portland State University protests , which had occurred only weeks previously , stating , " I hope this will help us live together as a community , both here and all over this planet Earth " . As the water began flowing , Halprin waded into the water , dressed in a jacket and tie . Jane Jacobs , author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* , mayor Terry Schrunk , and PDC chairman Ira Keller attended the fountain opening . In 2003 , an article by Randy Gragg in *The Oregonian* summarized the moment , saying :

[T] he fountain 's 1970 unveiling became a local legend . Held in the edgy days following a violent clash between Portland police and antiwar protesters , the dedication took on the mood of a Wild West drama as city officials gathered for speeches at the foot of the fountain and hundreds of youths assembled at the top . When the spigots released the fountain 's 13 @, @ 000 @-@ gallon @-@ a @-@ minute flow , however , any tensions quickly dissolved . While the officials politely applauded , the youths jumped in to the rallying cries of " Right on ! " " These very straight people have somehow grasped what cities can be all about , " Halprin said , turning from dignitaries to revelers to emphasize the democratic spirit underlying his design . " As you play in this garden , please try to remember that we are all in this together " .

In 1988 , the Portland Water Bureau expressed their surprise at the cost of running the fountain , which at the time was consuming \$ 34 @, @ 000 in water and \$ 13 @, @ 000 in electricity each year

. Also in 1988 , a 26 @-@ year @-@ old Vancouver man was drowned when he attempted to swim through a small water pipe and got wedged under a concrete slab . He was taken to the Oregon Health & Science University and was listed in critical condition . According to Portland police , he had been drinking alcohol .

In 1993 , all city departments were requested by mayor Vera Katz to identify areas where budgets could be reduced , and the Portland Water Bureau suggested mothballing fountains , including the Keller Fountain . The Oregonian stated " administrator Mike Rosenberger said the fountains were not an essential service , but he conceded that he would probably be taken out and shot before the public allowed him to shut the water off " .

Vandalism from " Soaping " , putting dish detergent in the fountain , has been common , and the massive amounts of generated foam cause more than \$ 1000 damage , due to the need to drain and clean the fountain . In the first " soaping " incident soap and green dye was placed in the fountain the night before it opened . Another incident happened in September 2002 . In 2007 , the Portland Water Bureau posted the name and photograph of a 19 @-@ year @-@ old who placed dish soap in the fountain and received a misdemeanor criminal mischief . The public shaming of the teen caused the incident to be discussed in many places , including KATU , The Oregonian , The Portland Mercury (" This is what happens when you screw with the Water Bureau ") , and The New York Times (" Don 't mess with the Portland Water Bureau ") . The fountain was soaped at least four times in August 2007 alone .

From May to late August 1996 the park was closed for a \$ 700 @,@ 000 refurbishment that included repairs and upgrades to filters and pumps , automated chlorination , restoration of cement , and updating of the lighting system . The fountain was also shut down in 1997 and 1998 for 10 months while the water bureau replaced a 1930s @-@ era pump . The piping was also relined with cross @-@ linked polyethylene in the spring of spring 2000 , a costly operation due to the original piping being cast into the concrete .

The Halprin Landscapes Conservancy was formed in 2001 and an article in The New York Times in 2008 stated that Keller was a Portland " ensemble considered to be one of Mr. Halprin 's masterpieces " .

= = Features = =

The park holds 75 @,@ 000 US gallons (280 @,@ 000 l ; 62 @,@ 000 imp gal) of water , pumping 13 @,@ 000 US gallons (49 @,@ 000 l ; 11 @,@ 000 imp gal) per minute through the waterfalls . While Portland Parks & Recreation maintains the park , in 1988 the Portland Water Bureau assumed responsibility for the fountain .

The park , which is known for its accessibility for allowing visitors to stand at the top of the waterfall , is designed according to construction code to prevent children or adults from falling down the waterfall ; the top of the falls are actually 36 inches (910 mm) pockets of water , acting as a safety wall . City officials were worried about liability from falls and had wanted a fence put across the top .

Trees in the park include shore pines . For many years , the park has been home to a popular food cart serving bento .

= = = Events = = =

In 1987 , Tom Grant played a piano solo in the park for a KGW TV public service advertisement . In 1988 , a parade and march of The Music Man began at the fountain , walking to Pioneer Courthouse Square with actors John Davidson and Sally Spencer .

In September 2008 , the Time @-@ Based Art Festival included the " City Dance of Lawrence and Anna Halprin " , held at the fountain . The Oregonian called the performance " a major event and brilliant achievement " . The event included music by Morton Subotnick .

= = Reception = =

In June 1970 , Ada Louise Huxtable said it " may be one of the most important urban spaces since the Renaissance " , comparing it to the Piazza Navona and the Trevi Fountain . An article for The New York Times by Ivan Doig discussed how Portland 's " livability " didn 't contribute to its " visitability " , pointing out that the Forecourt Fountain and lunchtime was " one more moment of Portland 's showing some loveliness and then getting back to its self @-@ assured routine of life " . The Oregonian wrote that Halprin 's parks " changed the way American landscape architects thought about city parks , and it sparked a Portland tradition of great urban plazas and parks " . In 2003 , New York 's Thomas Balsley said , " I love the Lovejoy and Forecourt fountains " when asked what Portland open spaces stood out the most to him .

In 1999 , the park was awarded a centennial medallion from the American Society of Landscape Architects in a ceremony with Vera Katz on July 29 .

According to Steven Koch of the Halprin Landscapes Conservancy , the parks in Lawrence 's Portland Open Space Sequence represent local geography : Source Fountain is above the timberline , Lovejoy Fountain and Pettygrove Park are in the middle , and Keller Fountain represents " the foothills with the roaring falls " . A writer in the Oregonian said the fountain " is an abstraction of a mountain waterfall " . Local architect Marcy McNelly said " they were the first full realization of a theory about reflecting forces of nature but not mimicking natural forms . People came from all over the world to see them " . Bob Gerding , who turned the First Regiment Armory Annex into the LEED Platinum @-@ rated performing arts center , said that in 25 years , " I hope [the Armory is] loved by the city . I hope people love to see plays there or have a meeting there or whatever , that it becomes just a cool thing in the city , like the Keller Fountain " .

In 2006 , Laurie Olin said the Halprin 's Portland sequence was " a huge influence on even becoming a landscape architect . I had gone off to Europe and saw them published there . They had to do with representation and meaning but also had an exuberance . They are landmark pieces . When Ada Louis Huxtable wrote in The New York Times that Forecourt Fountain (in front of Keller Auditorium) was the greatest civic fountain since the Renaissance , I knew she was right . They were also transformative for the field of landscape architecture , not all for the best , because there were a lot of bad copies and wannabes " .