

Home Builder/Development Co.: Burns Realty and Trust
Office Location: 1625 Broadway Ste 2900
Denver, CO
Operating Dates: 1899 - present
Principals: 1938 - Franklin and Joy Burns

Information

Franklin Lane Burns was born in Denver on August 1, 1914. He graduated from East High School and went on to attend the University of Southern California for a year and then enrolled at the University of Denver as a pre-med student for two years. In 1940 he dropped out of school to take over Burns Realty and Trust (established 1899) after the death of his uncle. He married his first wife, Evelyn Denahey, in 1939 and that same year, Burns sold his first home for \$1,250; it was just two rooms and 288 square feet (*News*, 08/14/1997).

In 1955, Mayor Nicholson named Burns as Denver's representative on the Inter-county Regional Planning Commission (*News*, 07/28/1955). He stated the commission "plans to make recommendations for the development of residential areas, industrial, commercial and agricultural areas; locations for public ways and places, playgrounds, etc." The commission was expected to create a regional master plan for the four-county area. Later that year, he filed for divorce.

Burns led the development of post-WWII housing near the Fitzsimmons Army Base, in the Green Mountain area, as well as developing commercial properties, such as Denver's Inverness. He served as the Treasurer of National Association Home Builders (NAHB) in 1957 (*News*, 01/27/1957). In 1959, Burns filed a request asking that Denver annex 239½ acres of Arapahoe County, near West Warren and Yale Avenues [south], and South Monaco Parkway [east] and Albion and Ash Streets [west] (*News*, April 17, 1959). The parcel eventually became part of Denver's Goldsmith neighborhood in the 1960s.

Burns announced his engagement to Joy Steelman Colwick, formerly of Texas, in 1960. At the time of the announcement, the *News* noted Burns was President of Burns Realty and Trust; a member of National Home Builders; director of the Denver United States National Bank; and a member of the Denver Club, Denver Country Club, Denver Athletic Club, Cherry Hills Country Club, and Columbine Country Club (*News*, 05/14/60).

Burns organized a successful political campaign in the 1960s to establish Denver's two percent sales tax. In 1970, Franklin and Joy Burns purchased the old Hampshire House in downtown Denver. Joy eventually oversaw its conversion into a five-star, all-suite hotel, renamed the Burnsley Hotel (*Colorado Builders Forum*, March-April, 2003).

Burns was nominated to the then newly-organized NAHB's Housing Hall of Fame in 1970. The nomination noted that he had "built more than 13,500 residential and commercial buildings in the Denver area. The homes and buildings are valued at more than \$120 million" (*News*, 02/11/1977). Using his personal donation of \$5 million, Denver University formed the Franklin L. Burns School of Real Estate and Construction Management in 1997. Franklin Burns passed away on August 10, 1997, at the age of 83. In 2002, Franklin and Joy Burns were elected to the Colorado Business Hall of Fame (*News*, 12/05/2001).

Awards

Development Name	Location	Award	Date
		National Association of Home Builders Hall of Fame	1970
		Colorado Business Hall of Fame	2002

Projects

Development Name	Location	Building Types	Date	Status
Burns Better-Built Bungalows	South Federal Blvd and West Jewell Ave.			
Harvey Park	2627 S. Osceola St., 2505 S. Lowell Blvd., 2794 S. Vine St. (1955); 2597 S. Osceola (1956)	Ranch	1955-63	
Commerce City	7990 Larkwood St. (1963)	Ranch	1963-?	
Havana Park, Aurora	730 Havana; 11160 E. 7 th Ave. (1953); 798 Havana (1957);	Ranch	1953-57	
Lynwood Heights	1321 Worchester	Ranch	1957-	
Aurora Hills	11592 E. Dakota Ave (1963)	Cape Cod, bi-level	1963-	
Hillside Manor	5211 S. Meade (1960)	Ranch, mid-level entry	1960-	
The Pinery			1962-	
Green Mountain Shopping Center				
Brentwood Shopping				

Center				
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Reference Material

- "Arapahoe Annexation Request Reduced," *Rocky Mountain News*, April 17, 1959.
- "Chamber Inducts Husband, Wife; Burnses Two of Six To Be Honored In State's Business Hall OF Fame," *Rocky Mountain News*, December 5, 2001.
- "Denver Home Builder Honored," *Rocky Mountain News*, February 11, 1977.
- "Denver Real Estate Man Joins Regional Planning Commission," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 28, 1955.
- "Home Builders in Denver Parade of Homes: 1953-1963," database Gearhart Center for Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.
- "Joy Colwick Is Engaged To Franklin Burns," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 14, 1960.
- "Late Real Estate Giant Helped Many Fulfill American Dream; Affordable-Housing Work Wins Colleagues' Praise," *Rocky Mountain News*, August 14, 1997.
- "Parade of Homes Plan Book," Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Denver, 1959.
- "Portrait of a Pioneer," *Colorado Builders Forum*, March-April, 2003.
- "Real Estate Man Seeks Divorce," *Rocky Mountain News*, January 27, 1955.
- Site Files Database, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

NOTE: The Internet yielded few valuable sites containing biographical information, and none that made specific reference to Burns's activities as a builder of affordable single-family homes in the Denver area.

The *Rocky Mountain News* obituary (08/14/1997) of Franklin Burns provided the most complete biographical sketch of his life and major accomplishments, but did not provide much detail regarding his developments or home building activities, either by sites or numbers of homes built. Other *News* entries add additional details of positions, accomplishments, or events. Still other newspaper articles, not cited here, appeared on society news columns and articles but did not reference Burns's home building efforts.

The *Colorado Builders Forum* article (Mar-Apr, 2003) provided a good overview of activity, but focuses more on his wife, Joy Burns, and her work after Franklin's death.