



Special Collections, PPLD

Spencer Penrose

1865-1939

Quick Facts

- Born in 1865 in Philadelphia and nicknamed “Spec”.
- Came to Colorado Springs in 1891.
- With his friend, Charles Tutt, Penrose invested in real estate, gold and copper mines and mills in Utah, making them wealthy.
- In 1906, Penrose married a wealthy widow, Julie McMillan.
- During 1911 and 1916, the Penroses built the Pikes Peak Auto Highway and founded the Pikes Peak Hill Climb auto race.
- The Broadmoor Hotel opened in 1918. In 1926, Penrose built a zoo on the slopes of Cheyenne Mountain for his animal collection. (Cheyenne Mountain Zoo today)
- Between 1929 and 1938, the Fountain Valley School, Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo, Will Rogers Stadium, Broadmoor World Arena, Broadmoor Art Academy (Fine Arts Center today) and the Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun all came to be because of the work of Spencer and Julie Penrose.
- In 1937, the Penroses created the El Pomar Foundation, which still gives money to many local charities today.
- Spencer Penrose died in 1939 and was buried at the Shrine.

Great Resources on Spencer Penrose

Bertozzi-Villa, Elena. *Broadmoor Memories: The History of the Broadmoor*. Missoula, MO: Pictorial Histories Publishing, c1993. pp. 32-128.

Bueler, Gladys. *Colorado's Colorful Characters*. Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, c1981. pp. 86-88.

Sprague, Marshall. *One Hundred Plus: a Centennial Story of Colorado Springs*. Colorado Springs: Colorado Springs Centennial, Inc., c1971, pp. 29-42.