



**The Historic DeVaux Estate:
Home of Fig Garden Swim & Racquet Club**

The story begins in 1916 when Delbert, Rose and their daughter Margaret moved from San Francisco to open the first Chevrolet dealership in the Central Valley area. Delbert was a personal friend of Louis Chevrolet. Shortly after their arrival, they began construction of their beautiful home in a then-distant rural area at the corner of Maroa and Rialto. The home was completed in 1919 with stunning landscaping and two firsts for residences in Fresno: the first underground sprinkler system and the first private swimming pool.

In the mid 1920s, Delbert had a falling out with Louis Chevrolet and lost the automobile dealership. Delbert and his brother, Norman, who had long-term ties with the automobile industry, started another dealership under the banner of Star Automobiles. In 1931, they introduced a new model called the DeVaux which was manufactured at plants in Oakland, California and Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Star dealership closed in 1932. It was a brief run in the burgeoning and highly competitive automobile business that was also confronted by the nationwide Depression.

With the closing of their automobile agency, Delbert and Rose saw an exciting opportunity – an opportunity to remain in their precious home and make it an income-producing asset. They decided to rent their small private pool and the surrounding park-like grounds to private parties. Since it was so popular, that same year they built a second larger pool called the Del Mar Rose, named after Delbert, Margaret, and Rose DeVaux.

Over the next twenty years, several public pools were built throughout the Fresno area, but the Del Mar Rose was quite special. Many of our senior members recall riding their bicycles to this grand pool, later known simply as the DeVaux. During World War II, the pool was used by the

Army for water survival training by troops being sent overseas. The original small pool and surrounding areas served as an Officers Club for Camp Pinedale and Hammer Field servicemen.

One of the most prominent features of the DeVaux Estate was a large water tower that was visible for miles. It was a main water source for the entire property. Behind the two-story family home, another building with a three-car garage and a three-bedroom apartment was used for the service employees. Today, the only remaining original structures are the elegant family home and two front entrance ways facing Maroa Avenue.

In 1962, the ten visionary founders of our club bought the seven-acre estate from Rose DeVaux. They lovingly converted this historic community treasure into the member-owned and family-oriented FIG GARDEN SWIM & RACQUET CLUB.

In mounting this retrospective of our club's origins, we are honoring our history and hoping to inspire a continued appreciation of this unique property. Please enjoy the many historic photos that line our hallway!