



Herbert Werner Thorne

July 28, 1928 - September 1, 2016

Herbert Werner Thorne, a life-long resident of the San Joaquin Valley, passed away on September 1, 2016. Herb was born on July 28, 1928 in Bakersfield, California. He was the only child of Werner and Ina Thorne. He grew up in Bakersfield and graduated from East Bakersfield High School in 1946. Herb began his college education at Fresno State before being called to duty in the Korean War. He served in the Army Intelligence Division. Upon returning from Korea Herb completed his Master's Degree in History and a teaching credential at Fresno State. He met his future wife Sue Marion Farrar while attending Fresno State. Herb and Sue were married in 1955.

Herb followed in his father's footsteps and began working with the Southern Pacific Railroad as an engineer. He was an active member of the railroad union and was asked to be a representative for the union. Herb had a passion for the rights of workers and followed a natural progression that lead him to employment in for the State of California in the Labor Relations Division as a Deputy Labor Commissioner in 1964. He continued on this trajectory and became a Mediator in the Mediation and Conciliation Service in the Department of Industrial Relations in 1970. Herb moved to the Fresno office in 1972 and relocated his family to Sanger. He was appointed as the Presiding Mediator for the Department of Industrial Relations in 1985. Herb retired from the State of California in 1991.

Herb and his wife Sue shared the love of plants. The gardens at their Sanger

home on Wildwood Island encompassed a collection of Australian conifers, vegetable gardens, and cactus gardens. Herb and Sue were members of the Master Gardeners, UC Cooperative Extension. Herb was a collector of cactus and succulents and was an officer in the Cactus and Succulent Society. Herb and Sue also shared the love of travel and traveled extensively in the US and abroad.

Herb lost Sue, the love of his life and wife of 49 years, in 2005. Herb is survived by his daughter Katie Kraetsch, his son-in-law John Kraetsch, and his twin grandsons Christopher Lowe and Eric Lowe. Herb felt that his most important accomplishment in life was his contribution to the success of his grandsons.

A celebration of Herb's life will be held at John and Katie Kraetsch's home on Saturday September 10th at 4:00. Remembrances may be made to a preferred charity, to the Garden of the Sun, or the Fresno Cactus and Succulent Society.

Cemetery Details

Chapel of the Light Cemetery

1620 W. Belmont Avenue
Fresno, CA 93728

Tribute Wall



“ *Herbert Werner Thorne*

September 15, 2022 at 09:34 PM



“ *Hi Katie,*

My parents, Lloyd and Nancy Reed, were good friends of Herb and Sue. I was honored to be part of that friendship. There is a family story that Herb taught me to say words like "whiskey" and "gin" when I was first learning to talk in hopes that I would say them in front of my very conservative grandmother. He had a wickedly funny sense of humor that I always appreciated. Knowing your parents was an important part of my life.

*Love,
Kathy Blankenship*

Kathy Blankenship - February 04, 2017 at 01:18 PM



“ *Herb was a valuable member of the Fresno Cactus & Succulent Society. He showed us how to run elections, got our bylaws into shape, was an officer and participated in all club activities. He was one of a kind. "He kept us straight," our former treasurer said.*

Sue Haffner - September 12, 2016 at 01:28 PM