

Sad News from Mojave –  
By Cathy Hansen



The Mojave Transportation Museum Foundation is deeply saddened to announce the passing of our dear friend and Founding Board Member, Bill Deaver.

Bill passed away in Bakersfield last Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. He had been in Hospice Care for a short period of time.

Bill's family moved to Mojave in 1948 when he was 12 years old. His dad drove a fuel truck in Arvin. The family stayed in a

hotel across from the railroad the first year in Mojave. Later they bought a house on 'O' Street across from the Mojave Veterans Building.

Bill liked hanging around the rail yard and being around the big steam engines at the Harvey House train depot that stopped in Mojave to take on water before heading up the hill through the Tehachapi Loop.

When he started high school he had to ride a bus all the way to Lancaster to attend Antelope Valley High School. It was the only high school available for miles around. After graduating high school, he worked the night shift as a county community dispatcher for the Kern County Sheriff, Fire Dept. and CA Highway Patrol in Mojave. He told some great stories of his time working there.



Bill liked helping people and that is why he was a natural to be involved in so many community organizations through the years, not only in Mojave, but all of the Antelope Valley, Tehachapi and Bakersfield.

He was a founding member of the East Kern-Antelope Historical Society, a founding member of the Mojave Transportation Museum in 2002, served as president of the Mojave Chamber of Commerce and on the board for many years, started the Mojave Town Council in the early 1990's, helped



develop the East Kern Development group and worked with the first group to raise funds for the East Kern Medical Center.

He served in the administrations of two U.S. presidents and on the staffs of two Members of Congress and a state legislator, as administrator of the region's court system, Mojave Constable, and served on the Board of Directors of the Mojave Air & Spaceport, Kern Economic

Development Corp., East Kern Economic Alliance, and the Edwards Community Alliance/East Kern Educational Resource Network.

Bill was well known for his love of the East Kern desert history, trains, photography, writing and working to keep the town of Mojave vibrant and growing.

He and his wife Billye, bought The Mojave Desert News newspaper and Bill served as Publisher and Editor. He kept everyone informed in East Kern County until 2010. More recently, he wrote a column in The Antelope Valley Press, until he moved to Tehachapi to be closer to his sister.

He was a member of the Kern Press Club and was honored with awards for his work in East Kern.

He was drafted into the U.S. Army and went to boot camp at Fort Ord. He loved telling stories about his time at Ft. Ord. He also served with the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

The first meeting of the Mojave Transportation Museum Foundation was held at Bill's house with other founding members, Wen Painter, Alan Radecki, Carol Flores and me. We were officially formed and incorporated by the State of California in November 2002.

Thank you Bill, for your drive and enthusiasm for preserving the rich history of our town that was established in 1876 by Southern Pacific Railroad. Thank you for



helping with the impressive development of Mojave Air & Spaceport, that started as a dirt strip in 1935 and became a Marine Corps Air Station in 1942. Thank you for reminding us of the history of our Golden Crossroads; State Highways 14 and 58 and for telling people that the Butterfield Stagecoach came from the north down through Mojave and the Twenty Mule Team wagons were designed and constructed by a man named Belshaw right here in Mojave and they came all the way from Death Valley to the railhead in Mojave to load the borax ore onto trains from 1883 to 1889.



You will not be forgotten Bill Deaver! Your stories live on in our hearts and we will preserve the rich history of the town you loved so much!

Photo credits:

#1 Photo of Bill Deaver found on Facebook

#2 San Joaquin Special – Mojave Transportation Museum history photos

#3 – Harvey House and Mojave Train Depot – Mojave Transportation Museum history photos

#4 – Twenty Mule Team – Photo found online

#5 – Corsairs on ramp at Marine Corps Air Station Mojave – Marine Corps archives photo