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A Pillar of the Community **Mike Bratton's Service in Nevada County**



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Aging Well

FOR A HEALTHY, VIBRANT, AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

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On the cover

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A Pillar of the Community: Mike Bratton's Service in Nevada County

Mike Bratton shown with his wife Robin. Mike has lived in Nevada County for nearly 50 years and supported the community through his work in insurance, fundraising activities, and local sporting events.

Photography: Courtesy of Mike Bratton



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A Pillar of the Community

Mike Bratton's Service in Nevada County

By Hollie Grimaldi Flores

If you have lived in or visited Nevada County for any length of time, chances are you have heard of Mike Bratton. Be it from his numerous advertisements in print media and on local radio stations, countless fundraiser programs, or banners at local sporting events, one thing is for sure, Mike Bratton is entrenched in the community.

Bratton came to Nevada County with his wife, Robin, nearly 50 years ago, shortly after graduating from Chico State University to work in the construction business with his father. The work was good and kept money in his pocket, but Bratton said he knew it was not what he wanted to do for the long haul.

A contact he made at an insurance training class while still living in Chico led him to pursue a career in the insurance industry, and the rest, as they say, is history.

“When you go out and serve, that is the best day of your life. Depending on if you can physically do that, but serving and watching other people watch you serve spurs them on to do that. Our world would be a lot better if there were more servants out there.”

—Mike Bratton,
Insurance Agent

From middle school and senior class president, Mike has always been someone who leads the way when he sees a need. His natural propensity to “give back” was a great fit for growing his business as he found himself coaching soccer, little league, and other sports with a young family. “They (other par-

ents) would kid me and say, ‘Bratton, you are the only one who gets paid to coach,’ because I was an insurance person and the people you rub elbows with and built relationships with would come to you with their insurance needs. So, it has always worked both ways,” he said.

Bratton is a firm believer in the (Personal Development Coach) Zig Zigler adage, “You can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.”

“That just comes naturally,” Bratton said. “I love serving. I love helping others and a lot of things have brought me to where I am today.”

Saying he is “involved” is a massive understatement. Before having children of his own he played in a local adult softball league and was a member of the 20/30 Club. The father of four and grandfather of six began coaching sports — from basketball and baseball to soccer and football

— including serving as the Nevada Union Football Boosters President for a decade when his family was young. As they grew, he continued his public involvement as a member of Rotary and serving on several other boards and committees, including Nevada City Law Enforcement, Fire Protection Council, Twin Cities Church and A New Day.

“I enjoy people,” Mike said. “I enjoy building relationships.”



Mike & Robin with 2 of their 6 grandchildren at Disneyland.

His relationship with A New Day began twenty years ago, shortly after his son Michael II committed suicide at the age of 25. Learning his son suffered from debilitating depression too late, the Bratton's, along with friends, organized a Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day, something his son had always wanted to do. The Bratton's are inspired to educate the public around symptoms related to depression and to support organizations who can help treat



Extended family enjoying the 2025 MEB2 Turkey Trot.

people who are suffering. Mostly, they want to remove the stigma associated with mental health issues. After 20 years, the Bratton's made the decision to turn the event over to another organization, which did not come easily.

"When you go out and serve, that is the best day of your life. Depending on if you can physically do that, but serving and watching other people watch you serve spurs them on to do that. Our world would be a lot better if there were more servants out there," Mike said, acknowledging the community is changing and it seems harder to get younger people involved in coaching and being on boards.

Again, he sees that as an opportunity to teach young people. "I go to Interact Club at Nevada Union and I see a hundred kids who are leading out there and working and volunteering. I see the football program with kids at the Turkey Trot working and volunteering. I see a lot of programs like that coming out of our schools which make me happy, but we need to teach more of that — a gift of serving and helping."

Nevada County is known for having an exceptionally large number of nonprofits. Bratton said that is part of what makes the community so special and another reason there is a need to keep that going and have young people

understand the outcome.

Bratton begins each day with a thankful heart. With his grown children staying local, they spend lot of time together. He said they all love the community and the love they received from community members, following their loss of Michael II, stating it was both a blessing and curse as they took time to grieve and find their footing.

"That helped all of us shape what we needed to do to help other people to understand depression

and be aware of suicide. And letting people know there is help and can be healing and hope; to give them the understanding that there are tools and they can live a normal life," he said. "It is even hard for me to say, but I know there is a lot of good that came out of Michael's tragic death — an awareness and helping other people get support and healing and saving many lives."

Now in his early seventies, Mike is trying to slow down a little bit, with his daughter Jennifer running the State Farm office and several long time employees meeting client needs, he finds he can spend a little less time at his desk. "I am trying to back down a bit and spend more time travelling and with Robin — and of course, time with our kids and our grand-kids. That is what we do."

But do not count him out anytime soon.

Bratton spends a lot of time at Fit Culture Studios in Nevada City (owned by his son, Joey), keeping active and working on having a balanced life, which starts with a workout and

"Giving back to our community and supporting our community is what makes us thrive. . . We should wake up every morning and think it is a Thanksgiving Day and be thankful for what we have."

—Mike Bratton,
Insurance Agent

eating right. He continues to run his business and continues to give back to groups in the community he values.

Bratton may have started his career as a contractor, but he has grown to believe the most important building comes in the form of relationships and trust. "Giving back to our community and supporting our community is what makes us thrive," he said. "We should wake up every morning and think it is a Thanksgiving Day and be thankful for what we have."



Family trip to Zion National Park.

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Nevada County Consolidated Veterans Council



Serving our Veterans and the Community

Good News for our “Experienced” Community.....

At the last Veterans Day event Grass Valley’s Vice Mayor introduced everyone to how the City will soon be honoring our Veterans and active Military by displaying their history on banners hung during the month of May in downtown Grass Valley.

Gold Country Senior Services shared how we had just teamed up to provide food to the community during the recent shutdown.

Then Vietnam Veteran, Tom Munroe, spent time honoring a group of people who are typically lost in the mix.

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Tom spoke of the Red Cross “Donut Dollies” who were volunteers trying to add a bit of normalcy for those of us in Vietnam. There were the Red Cross medical help that tried to help us make it home. There were Women flight attendants, “Stewardesses” in the old days, who flew in some crazy circumstances flying with guys paranoid about where they were headed, damaged having been there, or simply numb for 17 hours flying home. Coincidentally, Susan the owner of Tofanelli’s who was one of those “Stewardess” (she told me she prefers that description), was stunning Tom & the KNCO audience with her story & details that same day.



In 120-degree heat, she painted on mascara every morning—not for vanity, but so dying teenagers would see something that reminded them of home.



Trans International Airlines
Stewardess Re-Union

To top all this off Marrilee Shannon is a local who was a “Donut Dollie”. We are teaming up to bring in some fellow Dollies and show their film about “life as” at the 2026 celebration of our Vietnam Vets. Pencil in March 28th and wait for the details.

We have lots of local heroes. We have Americans here in Nevada County who love America and strive daily to support all..... All GOOD!

Happy Holidays

The City of Grass Valley
and our Community Honor
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Sp4 Sandra Boyd
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