

Boardwalk publicist Skip Littlefield dies

A Santa Cruz era ended yesterday with the passing of Warren Wendell "Skip" Littlefield, 79, who died in his Santa Cruz home after a long bout with cancer.

An area native, Littlefield was probably best known for his work as a promoter for the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. He retired in 1981 after 53 years as a publicist.

Public relations director Glenn LaFrank remembers him best for the work they did together in 1982. That was the year the Boardwalk celebrated its 75th anniversary.

"He was the star," LaFrank said of Littlefield. "He was the focal point of the story."

Without Littlefield, neither the celebration nor the Boardwalk itself would have been the

same. Littlefield was "a wealth of information" and "sharp as a tack," LaFrank said.

He knew everything about the Boardwalk because, LaFrank explained, "He did everything — advertising, public relations, marketing."

In the off-season, he laid linoleum. He had first started working for the Boardwalk as a pin boy for a pitch game when he was 11 years old. At 20 years of age, he dropped out of college to return to work for the Boardwalk.

He had worked as a lifeguard as well, but mainly, "He just had a flair for promotion," LaFrank said.

Divers, to Littlefield, were "Stratosphere Plungers," LaFrank said, and underwater swimmers were "Human Submarines."

He is grateful to Littlefield, LaFrank said, for lending his expertise to the anniversary celebration project.

"He really helped me out," he said. "He didn't have to talk to every reporter I brought through here, but he did."

"It was like he performed for them."

Littlefield was first tagged with the nickname of "Skip" by a high school track coach for consistently missing classes, and the name stuck.

He became a swimming champion as a teen-ager, and later attended Stockton's College of the Pacific, as well as Stanford University.

Among his many accomplishments, he was chairman of the Santa Cruz Advertising Committee and a director of the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce.

He had also written articles, many of them concerning local history, for the Santa Cruz Sentinel since 1926.

He leaves a daughter, Robin Shirlee Littlefield, of Soquel; a son, Warren McArthur Littlefield, of South Fallsburgh, N.Y.; a brother, Mervin Littlefield, of Santa Cruz; a sister, Marion Fuller, of Menlo Park and a cousin, Robert Littlefield, of Monterey.

His wife, Shirley Ann Littlefield, died last October. Though divorced in 1971, they had reportedly remained friends.

Masonic services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at First Congregational Church, 900 High St., Santa Cruz. The Rev. Joseph Kennedy, rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, in Ben Lomond, and Santa Cruz Lodge No. 38, F. and A.M., will officiate.

Interment will be in Soquel Cemetery.

Irvin M. Smith and Sons, Chapel of the Four Seasons, is in charge of arrangements.

REFERENCE

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