

Graniterock CEO Bruce Woolpert dies

It's unclear how the influential
CEO died on Tahoe's North Shore

By TODD GUILD
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WATSONVILLE — Bruce Woolpert, longtime Graniterock company CEO and education activist, died Sunday in an apparent boating accident at Lake Tahoe.

Woolpert, 62, was last seen in his boat towing a dingy to be moored in Lake Tahoe. His body was found sometime later floating in the water on the lake's north shore, according to Placer County Sheriff's Capt. Jeff Ausnow.

The dinghy and oars were found floating a short distance away.

It's unclear how Woolpert died, and an autopsy is pending to determine the cause of death. Foul play is not suspected, Ausnow said.

"It appears he fell from the dinghy and it appears to be accidental," Ausnow said.

Graniterock spokesperson Keith Severson said that Woolpert was at his Lake Tahoe condominium with family friends and



Woolpert

his 18-year-old son.

"It's an absolute tragic loss, and our world is certainly upside down," he said. "He was the hardest working person I think any of us knew. He was not just

an industry leader but a community leader."

Among other things, Severson was referring to Woolpert's creation in 2006 of the Committee for Good School Governance, a group of community leaders who said they wanted to foster change in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District.

The group endorsed candidates Willy Yahiro, Kim Turley,

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Libby Wilson and Leslie DeRose, and is thought to be largely responsible for their success in the 2006 school board election. The group also endorsed Kim DeSerpa, who won the Area 1 seat in the 2010 election.

Mark Kaminski, a longtime Graniterock board member, will take over as chairman of the board and acting CEO, Severson said.

"The Woolpert family has complete confidence in the current management team and Graniterock team members and plans to continue operating the company for another 112 successful years," Severson said.

Founded in 1900, Graniterock Company is a construction material supplier and heavy engineering contractor with more than 600 employees in locations from South San Francisco to Salinas. Woolpert was the third generation to lead the family-owned company.

Under Woolpert's leadership, the company received national and state recognition for its business operations, including the 1992 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the 1994 Governor's Golden State Award, according to Graniterock.

The company has been listed

in Fortune 500's "Best Places to Work in America," and in 2003 Woolpert was selected by Fortune Small Business magazine as a "Best Boss."

Woolpert was born in Watsonville. He had two children, Marianne and Arthur, with his wife, Rose Ann.

Before joining Granite Rock, he worked at Hewlett-Packard for nine years.

PVUSD board president Leslie DeRose said that Woolpert established classes at the company to help his employees further their education.

"I think it's devastating," she said. "He was such an advocate for the community. He put so much energy to make sure that his employees and their kids had access to education."

Woolpert also spearheaded the Algebra Academy in 2011, a weeklong program held at Graniterock's headquarters for middle school students that teaches them math in a fun environment without the threat of quizzes looming over their heads.

At the time, Woolpert said that the program was designed to give K-12 students a solid foundation of math at a time when they most need it.

"The efforts he made were countless," DeRose said.