



Eugene Godfrey

March 19, 1927 - September 6, 2019

In loving memory of Eugene Godfrey 3/19/1927-9/06/2019 who was preceded in death by his wife Jeanné, mother Emma Margaret, & his father Jack. He passed peacefully in his sleep with 3 of his 4 children by his side at 3:10 pm. He is survived & loved by his 4 children: Lynda Lee Harris, Barbara Jean Berg, Patricia Carolyn Swisher, & John Eugene Godfrey, also 2 son-in-laws; Edwin Swisher & Brad Berg, 6 Grandchildren & 8 Great Grandchildren. As owner of “Gene’s Pine Aire Campground” since 1972 located in Washington, CA, he also leaves behind 4 generations of campers, several of which he counted as “friends” & some “family”. He was loved by many, & cherished by those closest to him.

At a very young age he purchased & delivered newspapers, magazines & personal items requested by women working at a Brothel to make money for his family, as they were very poor. Also Gene regularly provided food for the family meals by raising chickens, selling eggs, and shooting rabbits & squirrels.

At the age of 14 he told his mom that he saw suspicious activity down the street & she told him to report it. The result of his report was that 2 German Spies were captured during WWII.

At age 16 during hard times, his mother told him you’re either going to college

or you're going to enlist, but you're not going to stay here. She lied for him to get into the Navy in 1943 & off to San Diego he went to begin service to his country during WWII. He traveled all over the world. A couple of his jobs were a radio operator & also the Captain's personal cook.

He graduated high school while in the Navy & received an Honorable Discharge the week before the Korean War began.

He met his wife packing oranges in southern CA, teaching her how to pack them. They were married 6 weeks later, before going north as migrant workers.

He later worked in a steel mill & earned an AA Degree in Metallurgy.

He worked building small homes in Whittier, CA & purchased one for his growing family. Gene & Jeanné were active in the "Young Marrieds Group" at the First United Methodist Church in Whittier and square danced with many of them. Later, Gene helped out with the pancake breakfasts at St. John's in the Valley Methodist Church.

He worked for North American Aviation in Downey, later transferring to Atomics International in Canoga Park. He moved his family there after commuting from Whittier for over a year. He worked on fuel development & had an active part working on aqueous homogeneous reactors. He had a top secret security clearance, and although he would never reveal what he knew, it was often obvious that he had answers to some of the mysteries we would learn about in the national news. Prior to retiring he accidentally received a dose of radiation which contributed to health issues.

In 1974, Gene & Jeanné moved to Washington, CA to work their business "Gene's Pine Aire Campground" for over 45 years. Jeanné had been active

with Girl Scouts while her children were young & they welcomed "The Girl Scouts of America" to come & camp for free in the fall.

During some financially difficult years operating their campground, he went back to work several times as a consultant for GE, working on nuclear reactors around the world. This involved him videotaping while swimming underwater. He enjoyed working with the people of Fukushima, Japan the most as he spoke of them often. This was prior to the tsunami that devastated the area.

He was active in serving the town of Washington as Mayor & Fire Chief. He & Jeanné participated in the Fire Dept. annual Pancake Breakfast & Chicken BBQ fundraisers in their younger days. He was involved with the Fire Depts. delivering of Christmas gifts & the makings for a Christmas dinner to families in need. He loved to see the joy it brought to those families. He also delivered dinner meals to a few town shut-ins that Jeanné had prepared. They both enjoyed making several kinds of Christmas cookies and making plates of cookies to deliver to several people at Christmas time. It was a lot of work done in love.

They let people run up propane tabs which were never repaid, so families with children didn't go without heat in the cold winters. Also when she heard of an animal needing veterinary help, & the family couldn't afford it, she'd pay the bill so the animal didn't have to suffer.

Gene loved their dogs and wound up rescuing several senior dogs that he outlived. One time they drove 2 hours to Sacramento because they saw on a TV morning show a dog named Kirby that was so UGLY & hairless they felt no one would save him. They stopped on their way home at the vet to have him checked out and received a very large vet bill. It was money well spent as 3

months later you didn't recognize him because of the love & care that he received.

At least a couple of times Gene was featured in "The Union" newspaper with his picture. Once was on Aug.8, 2002. He was interviewed about his experience as a Navy Veteran of WWII, telling about his service for his country. "Not a pretty picture ... images he'd never forget." The other was when he was Fire Chief serving in Washington, pictured with their firetruck.

Gene loved looking for gold. He started teaching his family with gold pans while on family vacations. They traveled all over California, camping in a tent. Then he made his first cabover camper which was very heavy but so much fun! Then he sold it & purchased a Bluebird Camper to his delight. His family learned to sluice box, & then dredge for gold. He also did a little metal detecting. He built his family a dune buggy to take, along with a few other families & went to some places that were very remote & some not, like Pismo Beach. He had hobbies of glass molding at one time, jewelry making, & loved to read! He subscribed to and read about a dozen magazines of many types for many years. He & his son-in-law Ed would research stocks & invest in the stock market. They both enjoyed telling each other what they had learned, and made decisions on what to invest in.

At least twice in his life, Gene saved the lives of 2 people. In 1968, he & his daughter Barbara were driving home through Box Canyon, a short cut between the San Fernando Valley & Simi Valley. It's a narrow, winding road. Gene saw dust at the side of the road ahead & rushed down the cliff to investigate. His fast action saved the life of a girl who had gone off the road in her car. Another time while at his campground a neighbor had called & told him that an unattended kid had gone into the river at his campground. This was at a time when the river was up several feet from the spring run off. Gene went into the cold & fast flowing river, risking his own life & got the child's hand

& passed him on to safety. Thankfully the child was closer to shore than the middle of the river. Gene struggled to get back to shore & thankfully God or an angel helped him back.

Gene was a proud TRUMP supporter to the end! He was going to vote for him again in 2020. TRUMP wants to “drain the swamp” & Gene supported him and wanted to see it happen.

Even after Gene’s wife passed away, he always had a positive outlook on life, & had plans for the future. Gene remained sharp & clear minded until his passing. He had a GREAT laugh, & loved life! We will MISS him, but we know he has a new, pain free body & reunited with the Love of his Life which had resulted in 68.5 years of marriage.