



Gary Ralph Freeman

August 18, 1940 - January 20, 2024

Gary Freeman, a distinguished community leader and a third-generation Californian, passed away recently, leaving behind a legacy of unwavering community service and commitment. Born on August 18, 1940, in Paso Robles, and predeceased by his parents, Gene and Irene Freeman, and siblings Gene and Patsy, Gary's life journey was marked by dedication to family, friends, and community.

He was an amazing and devoted Husband to Joan Smith Freeman, Father to Kimberly Freeman Smith and Sandra Freeman, Brother to David Freeman and Sister-in-law Carolyn Freeman, Brother-in-law to Chef Bill Mitchell and Phyllis Gottschall, Staats and Mona Howell; Papa to Remie and Sadie Smith and Isaac and Ella Smith, and Uncle to Jessica and Matt Gottschall, David Robert Freeman, Jenine Michelle Hamilton and Ian Hamilton, Aubrey Howell Robinson and Paula Robinson, Ben & Erin Howell Whitehurst, Madison Howell, Rocky Branum and Diana Ewald and many cousins.

Gary's early experiences shaped his ethos of hard work and community involvement. He grew up on a dairy out of Proberta, California and went to a one room school down the road until his family sold the dairy and moved to Orland, California. He attended elementary school, jr. high and high school in Orland and graduated from Orland High School in 1958.

After graduation from Orland High School in 1958, Gary stayed true to his convictions. He believed that a person needs to be committed to issues and be involved in his community. As an OHS student body officer Gary was

selected to represent his school at Boys State during his junior year. That began his life of community service. In all his years of community service, he chose paths that have given something back to the communities where lived. Gary attended Chico State, majoring in business. He began working for Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) in electrical line construction. It was the first step in a career that would span 32 years with the company and take him to Glenn/Tehama District Manager. He was the supervisor of over 800 people when he retired in 1990.

At the time of his retirement from PG&E, Gary had spent 22 years in management, which took him to the communities of Napa, Winters, and Gridley before returning to Orland and taking over supervision of Orland, Red Bluff, Redding, Willows, Chester, and Chico.

His promotion to the small community of Winters, at the age of 32, made him the youngest manager in the system of 141 offices. He became involved in the community there and served on the Winters City Council. In 1975, he was named Winters Citizen of the Year for helping put together countywide organizations and re-energizing the Yolo County Chamber of Commerce. Another promotion and a move to Gridley found Gary volunteering his time and energy with local schools. PG&E expected its managers to be active in the community, but it was something he also felt was very important.

Much of Gary's interest in government came from J.A. Russell's history classes at Orland High School. He even thought of being a history teacher at one time. In Gridley, Gary served as a member and president of site councils, and as a high school trustee. He even was an announcer at the Orland Football games.

Gary was an active Rotarian since 1972 and an Orland City Council member from 1983-1988 - two of those years as mayor. In 1989, he was named Citizen of the Year by the Orland Historical and Cultural Society.

One of Gary's accomplishments is that of co-founder of the Tri-County Economic Development Corporation, now known as 3Core. He served as its president since its formation in 1985. The organization was formed to

stimulate economic growth and represents the counties of Glenn, Butte, and Tehama.

A member since 1987, Gary was President of the National Association of Development Organization (NADO). NADO concentrates on development in rural cities and counties. He was often in Washington, D.C. on behalf of north state counties. He traveled to Germany to help teach Economic Development to community leaders during reunification of that country. He was also asked to teach all over the state of Alaska.

Gary proudly served as Glenn County Supervisor for District 2 for 12 years and was President of CSAC, California Supervisors Association of Counties, which is the statewide organization of County Supervisors representing all California Counties. He traveled throughout the state of California speaking at many events and spent much time at the Capitol in Sacramento as well as Washington D.C.

Gary was a lifetime member of the Masons both in Orland Laurel Lodge No.245, serving as Worshipful Master three times as well as multiple times as Secretary, Senior Warden, and Senior Deacon for many years, then transferring his membership to Howard Lodge No.37 in Yreka in 2016.

In retirement, Gary continued to serve his community, engaging in various local organizations. Gary retired to the City of Yreka in Siskiyou County with his wife Joan, and loved the city, county, and life there since 2011. He was welcomed into the community by all who knew him. Gary served on the Shasta Valley Cemetery District. He was a member of Montague Rotary, on the board of Ore-Cal Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) and was President of the California Association of RC&D Councils, the Pacific Rim Region and was the Treasurer and on the board of the National Association of RC&D Councils which often met in Washington DC, representing California, and rural areas around the United States.

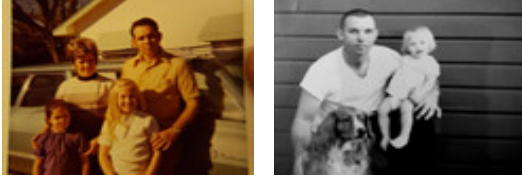
Join us in celebrating the remarkable life of Gary Freeman on Saturday, February 10, 2024, from 4:00 - 8:00 pm at the Yreka Elks Lodge #1980.

Gary's life was a testament to the power of community, service, and leadership, leaving an enduring impact on all who knew him.

Tribute Wall



“ 2 files added to the album *Obituary Wall*



Girdner Funeral Chapel - April 27 at 03:44 PM

SF

“ *The best father my sister, Kimberly Freeman-Smith, and I could have wished for. We were truly blessed to have him for our Dad. Between him and my Mom, CarolLee Freeman, we had a truly blessed life. My parents were married 40 years.*

The B&W photo is of myself and my Dad and our dog, Gidget. The color photo is of my Mom, Dad, younger sister Kimberly, and myself.

I'll forever miss you Popsicle. You were truly a great provider, friend, and Father. You always had time for us and gave us a great life. I'll see on the other side. ❤️□□□□

Sandra Freeman - May 06, 2024 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ *The life cycle continues - may this tree be blessed with Gary's spirit. With deepest sympathy,*



Jane Dewar - February 10, 2024 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ Gary's bright smile and welcoming nature was always something to look forward to at our gatherings He was well loved by many



Brian W Meek - February 07, 2024 at 12:00 AM

AF

“ We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Girdner Funeral Chapel

A Memorial Tree was planted for Gary Ralph Freeman - February 06, 2024 at 12:00 AM