



Wilbur "Van" van Over

November 28, 1922 - December 21, 2013

Wilbur Moore van Over, 91, passed away on Dec. 21, 2013 at Madrone Hospice in Yreka.

"Van", as he was affectionately known among his friends and family, was born on Nov. 27, 1922 in Bronson, KS, the 2nd child of Don and Fern van Over. In May, 1927 his parents sold everything except clothing, bedding, dishes, camping gear and the car, packed all they could in the car, left the rest to be shipped later, then left in their 1926 black Model "T" Ford Touring Sedan for Modesto, CA, arriving on June 27, 1927. There Van would spend all of his schooling years and many of his adult years.

During his growing up years Van's interests were many and varied. He played violin between the ages of 10-18 and cornet in Modesto High School band for 4 years and Stanislaus Co. Boys Band and Modesto Junior College band for 2 years, the Stanislaus Co. band winning the band competition at the San Francisco World Exposition in 1939. He also worked in the high school print shop which led to him working as a type setter at a small newspaper in Homedale, ID in 1946. At the age of 12 Van joined the Boy Scouts and except for his 4 years in the Navy would remain active in some capacity until his passing, thereby logging in 70 years of membership. As a boy he attained the rank of Life Scout and as an adult scout he received his Wood Badge Beads in 1961, served as president of Crater Lake Council in 1962-63, received the Silver Beaver award in 1964 and the Daniel Carter Beard Masonic Scouter Award in 2003. One of his proudest moments in Scouting was when his

youngest grandson, Jacob, received his Eagle Scout Award.

After graduating from Modesto High School in 1940 Van served as assistant manager and doorman at State Theatre in Modesto and later at Tower Theatre in Roseville. In Dec. 1941 he and his best friend joined the Navy together. Upon arrival at boot camp they were separated and did not see each other again until WW II was over. But they remained close friends until Van's death separated them. Van advanced from Apprentice Seaman to Petty Officer Second Class, Yeoman and served on the USS Tennessee, the USS Denver, and the last 2 years on the USS Columbia, all in the South Pacific. He was discharged from the Navy in Oct. 1945 with Good Conduct Medal, Philippine Liberation with 2 Stars, Asiatic Pacific with 1 Silver Star and 1 Bronze Star and Navy Unit Commendation.

In March 1945 while in port at San Pedro Van meet the love of his life, Viola Jacobs, a recent transplant from Indiana. They were married on Nov. 25, 1945 and spent the next 66 years together, separated by Vi's passing in Nov. 2011, just 5 days after their anniversary.

1947 proved to be a monumental year for Van. In Feb. he went to work as a social worker for the Stanislaus Co. Welfare Dept. in Modesto and this work would shape his career for the next 33 years. He later became a social work supervisor for Stanislaus Co., and from July 1957 through Feb. 1959 served as Amador Co. Welfare Dept. Director in Jackson, then moved on to serve as Siskiyou Co. Welfare Dept. Director in Yreka from March 1959 until his retirement in Dec. 1980. During his years as Siskiyou Co. Director he mentored 3 men who would go on to become successful directors. He was well known throughout the state as an "ultra conservative" director and was proud to "fit the bill". In 1962 Van was one of 20 county employees who founded what is now Siskiyou Central Credit Union and would later serve 5 years on the Board of Trustees.

While still working at the welfare department Van became a locksmith, known as "Van the Lockman", working evenings and weekends, always ready to help those locked out of their cars, even in the rain and snow. After retirement he

became a fulltime locksmith, serving businesses, residents and visitors throughout the county and banks as far away as Crescent City. He was well known for providing free service to parents who had accidentally locked their keys and children in their cars.

Van joined the Lions Club in 1957 and during the years held every office except treasurer, some more than once. In 1962 he and 2 other members started the Merchant Flag Program which is still operating today. In 2007 he was honored as a 50 year member.

He was a member of the Free and Accepted Masons, having joined in 1947. Through the years Van served as the head officer in each of the Masonic organizations that was active in Yreka. He was also active in several capacities outside of the local organizations. In 1993 he was honored as the recipient of the Hiram Award, given for outstanding service in Masonic organizations and in 2011 he was invested with the rank and decoration of a Knight Commander of the Court of Honour by The Supreme Council, 33°.

The United Methodist Church was Van's church of choice. During his 54 years of membership at the Yreka church he served as treasurer and as a member of the Board of Trustees, voluntarily took care of the yard for a few years, and maintained the buildings locks and keys for many years. Van helped to build the education building and provided finishing touches by personally installing all of the doors, and locks and making all of the keys for the building. He was also active in the Emmaus program for many years.

Van was preceded in death by his wife Viola, parents Don and Fern, and brother Richard.

He leaves behind his daughter and son-in-law Judy and John Elliott of Yreka; granddaughters Dawn Hammond (Robert) of Santa Ana and Bethany Elliott of Yreka; grandsons Christian Elliott of Big Bear, Timothy Elliott of Yreka and SSG Jacob Elliott, US Army, stationed in Hawaii; great-grandson Micah Hammond of Santa Ana; great-granddaughters Jenna Hammond of Santa Ana and Skylar Elliott of Yreka; sister-in-law Adrienne van Over of Modesto; 4

nieces and a nephew.

Van will be dearly missed by many friends and relatives. A Celebration of Life will be held at 2 PM on Jan. 10, 2014 at the Masonic Hall, 101 3rd St, Yreka. Interment will be in the family plot in Pioneer Cemetery in Modesto. Memorial contributions may be made to Madrone Hospice, 255 Collier Circle, Yreka, CA 96097.