Robert Lee Hill

March 7, 1925 - September 25, 2020

Cambria, California -
Robert Lee Hill was born in Bottineau, ND, the youngest of nine children. He claimed he could ice skate before he could walk. Famous for his skill at marble playing, he had his own paper route by the age of ten and was an avid boy scout. His family moved to Fargo when he was eleven. There he sold papers in front of the theater, set pins at the bowling alley and caddied at the golf course. This was at the height of the depression and he was proud to be able to buy treats for himself and his friends. In school he excelled at sports, especially basketball and hockey. In 1940 he traveled two days by rail to apply for a construction job in South Dakota. He was denied since he was only 15 and hiring age was 16. With no money for a return trip, he spent his last dime on a milk shake and practiced writing his new birth year. He got back in line and was hired after promising to provide his birth certificate in two weeks. (He never did.) That summer he worked his way up from shoveling excess tar to driving heavy equipment. He joined the army before finishing high school and fought in the Philippines, then became a MP in Japan after the war ended. He received a Purple Heart but was especially proud of earning his sharpshooter medal. Unfortunately, he had contracted several jungle fevers during his service and they eventually led to a neurological disorder that affected his ability to walk. After the war he attended college for a short time and then went to work for Murphy Finance Co. One day as he was struggling to walk to work a doctor asked if he would like a lift. Of course He said he would. This

doctor arranged for him to be treated at the Mayo Clinic. Robert was able to transfer to Rochester and spent six months as an outpatient, learning to find other pathways for his nerves to travel. He not only relearned to walk but with the help of an exchange student from Norway, learned that if you can bend your knees you can ski. That became a lifelong pleasure. He married Phyllis Kalmes in 1949 and had four children. They lived in Boise, ID where he traded summer weekends clearing the ski slopes of Bogus Basin for winter passes for the family. Robert loved pheasant hunting with his German short hair pointer, Skippy, especially the naps they shared in the farmer's cornfield. Other fond memories included riding his motorcycle to work and taking the children, two at a time, for ice cream cones. In 1960 the family moved to California when Robert was recruited by Security Pacific Bank. Having been in the finance business for so many years he had become and excellent judge of character and understood how loaning money could make people more successful. He loved the Central Valley agriculture community and in 1967 he became the branch manager in Wasco. He enjoyed camping with his family, golfing with friends, fishing in Alaska and horeseback excursions in the Sierras. Phyllis died in 1975 after a long illness and in 1976 he married Doris Crettol, who died in 1995. While attending his 50th high school reunion, he met Harriett Allison. They later married and lived in Tulsa, OK until her death in 2005. In 2007, having moved back to Cambria,California he met and married Mary Ackerman Sneed. They had a fine time traveling, enjoying their families and just being together. He was a convert to Catholicism. In the Philippine combat zones, where life was precarious, there was always a priest ready to minister to the Catholic boys. Robert was impressed and a bit jealous. Back home, he studied the religion, became a convert and a devout Catholic. His lifelong motto was "As you sow, so shall you reap." And his advice to young people was, "More important than wealth is friendship." He had been helped throughout his life by many people family, friends, and strangers and he was grateful to them. He loved smiles and hated profanity. At the age of 95, Robert died at home with his family. In poor health for the past

two years, he remained good natured and loving. As a caregiver himself for three wives, he appreciated everyone who helped him. He is survived by his wife Mary, daughters Coleen Peters (Don) Porter, Lynne (Ted) Budy, Maureen Oliver and son Jann (Kathy) Hill, Doris' daughters Connie (Tom) Franceschi and Joan (Doug) Enns, niece Patricia (Patrick) Strother, ten grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by Vincent Oliver. He was loved by Mary's children Lisa (Frank) Prado, Ed (Ronna) Ackerman and Paul (Valerie) Ackerman. A private burial was held at the Wasco Cemetery. A celebration of life will be held when it is safe.

Previous Events

Graveside

OCT **2**. 1:30 PM (PT)

Wasco Memorial Park
300 Leonard Ave
Wasco, CA 93280