

G. Louis Fletcher passed away on Monday evening, 8/20/2018, from complications associated with Parkinson's Disease. Louis died in his Redlands, CA, home peacefully and surrounded by family.

Lifelong Redlands resident, G. Louis Fletcher was born October 18, 1934, in Redlands Burke Sanitarium in Redlands, California, to Edward T. and Vada J. Fletcher. Louis grew-up working in his family-owned Fletcher Planing Mill and Cabinet Shop and helped manage the family owned orange groves. He attended Kingsbury Elementary School, Redlands Junior High School and graduated from Redlands High School in 1952 where he played trumpet, was a member of the business staff of the Makio yearbook and sports editor for the Hobachi student newspaper. As a high school senior, he received the Stanford University Dofflemeyer Eagle Scout Scholarship. He surprised everyone by turning down this four year, full-ride scholarship to Stanford to attend the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena, the university he was introduced to by a seventh-grade math teacher who was impressed by Louis' extraordinary math and science aptitude.

Louis graduated from Caltech with a BS in engineering ('56) and an MS in Mechanical engineering ('57). He received the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in Industry while in graduate school. While in college and after graduation he worked for the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica, the Grand Central Rocket Company in Mentone, and for the Hydro Conduit Company in Colton. He also earned a real estate broker license and taught thermo dynamics and engineering at the University of Redlands from 1957-58. It was during this time teaching at the University of Redlands that he met his wife, Janet.

In 1966 Louis was hired by the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (MUNI) as their first in-house civil engineer. MUNI had just secured a contract to oversee the design and construction of the East Branch of the California State Water Project (SWP). SWP would become the largest man-made water conveyance system in the USA, now including numerous storage facilities, reservoirs and lakes, miles of canals and pipelines, and five hydroelectric plants. Jeff Crider, a MUNI historian, wrote, "... the district hired Louis Fletcher as its chief engineer. [He was] widely described as a brilliant thinker... Fletcher took a strategic approach and set about the task of designing a highly effective water system that would serve the entire San Bernardino Valley." Louis said that he took the job because "...it just fit what I liked doing. It was probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a young engineer."

In 1980, Louis was appointed General Manager where he remained until his retirement in 2001, compiling 35 years of service with MUNI. He devoted himself to the formulation, design and administration of a water system that served the valley he loved. Throughout his career he was renowned for creatively simplifying complex ideas, often employing hand drawn cartoons featuring his own creation, the "Groundwater Fish". The actions he took in opposing the U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's (USACE) Mentone Dam location and design are now the stuff of legend. He kicked-off the opposition with an organized protest, inviting newspaper and TV news reporters, politicians and a large Corp of Engineer contingent to an outdoor news conference at the site of the proposed dam. Large weather balloons were raised 250 feet high across 3.5 miles distance (the proposed height and length of the dam, respectively). Years later a USACE engineer recalled, "Louis fought us and fought us but when I saw all those balloons sticking up there I knew I was done." In addition to several controversial risks, including standing atop California's San Andreas Fault, the Corp's design involved a single massive dry dam and provided only flood control. The key element of Louis' opposition strategy was presenting a new location and a design incorporating a series of levees, water storage, and trails based on a 1928 State of California engineering report. Louis said, "The state had come up with a better plan long before the Corp even got involved." The battle would end four years later with the scrapping of the Mentone Dam plan and approval to construct the Seven Oaks Dam.

Louis was an active member of a variety of organizations including the Tau Beta Pi Association, Caltech Gnomes Honorary Alumni Society, Caltech Alumni Board, the National Society of Professional Engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers (Pipeline Division), the Redlands Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts of America, Redlands Highlands Farm Labor Association, and Trinity Church in Redlands. Louis received many awards and recognition including the 1981 J. James R. Croes Medal by the American Society of Civil Engineers for the report titled: *Observations of Mortar Lining of Steel Pipelines*, which he co-authored with Samuel Aroni. He also received the Cal State, San Bernardino Water Resources Institute 2007 Life Time Achievement in Water Resources Award. He is featured in the Cal State, San Bernardino Water Resources Dept. Oral History program archives, as well as in the MUNI 2014 publication, *Delivering The Future: 60 years of Vision and Innovation 1954-2014*.

Outside of water management, Louis grew oranges in the Redlands area, enjoyed Real Estate investing and development, and loved spending time with his children and grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ted and Vada Fletcher, his infant sister, Jeanne Fletcher, and his brother Edward Fletcher, Jr. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Janet Fletcher, his children Laurie (Brian) Schow of Monument, CO, Cheryl Fletcher of Pasadena, CA, Don Fletcher of San Diego, CA, and his grandchildren Melanie (Kyle) Carter, MD, Brandon Schow and Nicole Schow. He is also survived by nephew Ed Fletcher III and niece Elizabeth Freel.

The surviving family would like to extend a special thanks to Above & Beyond Homecare Service as well as to Redlands Community Hospital Hospice.

The family has designated the following charities for friends who would like to make memorial contributions in honor of Louis:

Lester Lab at Caltech

c/o Dr. Henry Lester
1200 East California Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91125

The National Parkinson's Foundation

200 SE 1st Street, Suite 800
Miami, FL 33131
parkinsons.org