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Memorial Service for Mayor Busch



Mayor Daryl Busch 1941-2017

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An overflow crowd paid its respects to former Perris Mayor Daryl Busch who was remembered as an iconic civic leader and saluted as "our friend, our father, our papa, our mayor, our hero."

Dignitaries attending the Dec. 8 memorial service at the First Congregational Church of Perris included Riverside County Sheriff Stan Sniff, Brig. Gen. Russell Muncy, former March ARB commander and current vice-commander of 4th Air Force and Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley.

Also paying their respects were Perris Mayor Michael Vargas, Mayor Pro-Tem David Starr Rabb, City Councilwoman Tonya Burke and City Councilwoman Rita Rogers along with Perris administrators and staff and elected representatives from surrounding communities.

Mr. Busch, the longest-serving mayor in Perris history, died Dec. 3. He was 76 and had served as mayor from 1999 to 2016.

Jeremy Elliott, who presided over Mr. Busch's memorial service, said it is natural for family, friends and colleagues to mourn the loss of Mr. Busch but encouraged the standing-room-only audience to "rejoice in the life he led."

"He was a man who made us feel comfortable, a man who prioritized people," Elliott said. "Daryl loved everyone."

Charlene Busch, Mr. Busch's daughter-in-law, said he lived by a simple code: "Be true to your work, be true to your word, be true to your friends."

And he used his keen sense of humor to dispense life lessons to his nieces and nephews. Charlene Busch recalled the time when Uncle Daryl asked a carload of nieces and nephews which one wanted to do something noble. Not fully understanding the meaning of the word, one youngster volunteered. Mr. Busch explained that in this case being noble meant that "I have six pieces of gum for seven people."

Mr. Busch was active in community sports and never missed a football or soccer game or wrestling competition or an Eagle Scout promotion ceremony. He enjoyed golfing with friends and felt the game "should be fun, not frustrating." Even as Charlene, her husband, Barry, and their daughter, Holly, grew into adulthood, Mr. Busch made sure to give them ice-cream money every time they went on a trip or vacation.

"He was an amazing role model—husband, dad, grandpa, human being," Charlene Busch said. "Rest in peace Papa."

Built a great team

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, who served with Mr. Busch for 17 years, credited him with building a collegial atmosphere among himself and the four members of the City Council.

Together, the Busch-led team saved the City from the brink of bankruptcy and forged a legacy that brought financial stability to Perris and launched an era of unprecedented residential, commercial and industrial development.

"He was solid as a rock," Rogers said.

Among the impressive list of accomplishments in Perris include a new public-safety center, the DropZone WaterPark aquatics center, Patriot Park sports complex, Big League Dreams Perris, Mercado Park, the Mercado Park and Perris Station apartment complexes, a new fire station, City Hall improvements, the Walmart Supercenter, Cardenas, Winco and Rio Ranch markets, the Home Depot Center, a City emergency operations center, new sewer installations for residents in the impoverished Enchanted Heights neighborhood and creation of the ongoing Live Well Perris healthy-eating active-living campaign. The latter two projects earned Perris awards from the National League of Cities.

"Daryl respected each of his fellow council members and valued our input," Rogers said. "Praise God for the gift of Daryl Busch."

Respected throughout the region

Supervisor Ashley, a Perris resident, said Mr. Busch's legacy reaches well beyond the Perris City limits. His work on the March Joint Powers Commission helped reshape the former Air Force facility into a jobs and tax-generating dynamo.

His work on the Metrolink board of directors resulted in train service coming to Perris in 2015. His relationship with the Riverside County Transportation Commission resulted in the widening of I-215 and in new interchanges along the corridor from Cactus Avenue in Moreno Valley to Ethanac Road in south Perris, shortening the commutes of thousands of motorists each day.

"He left quite a legacy," Ashley said. "In my opinion, Daryl Busch is the single most-effective mayor in Perris' history. There have been other great mayors but none served so long, so effectively and accomplished so much."



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