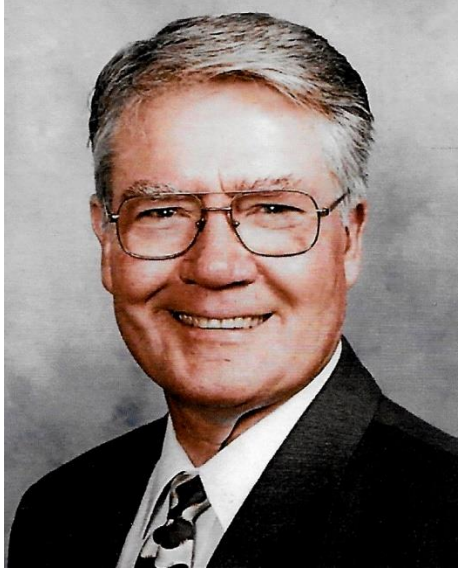


Stephen Butters

90, Alta Loma



Stephen Butters found great joy and solace in nature. He hiked from Tahoe to Yosemite and climbed to the top of Half Dome. He navigated the twists and turns of Havasu Canyon to the Colorado River, and he traveled the John Muir and Pacific Crest trails. When he was 80, he rode 100 miles on horseback from Florence Lake into Evolution Valley and beyond.

Butters and his wife, Mona, traversed the country in an RV. They visited Alaska, toured the Midwest, crossed the country to Florida and found their way north to Newfoundland.

“He enjoyed traveling, he enjoyed the out of doors,” said his son, Shawn, who fondly recalled the backpacking trips he and his brother, Mark, took with their father.

Butters also loved ice cream, “Homemade ice cream, any kind of ice cream,” said Shawn. His favorite flavor was vanilla.

On Sept. 28, Butters died of complications due to COVID-19 in San Jose. He was 90.

Butters was warm and gregarious with a dry sense of humor. He had an extensive library, stocked with thousands of books. He could read Greek, and he wrote poetry. He loved socializing, and he and Mona were known for throwing parties and visiting with friends.

Butters was born in Brawley, Calif., in 1929. His father owned a large farm in the Imperial Valley, where the family grew flax, alfalfa, cotton and sugar beets. Shawn said his father always considered himself a farmer at heart, and that he had empathy for the immigrants and farm laborers who worked the soil.

He graduated from high school at 16 and went to college before moving with his wife to attend seminary school at Florida Christian College. He served as a minister before becoming a teacher, counselor, vice principal and principal. He retired as director of business services for the Chaffey High School District in San Bernardino County.

“He touched a lot of lives, a lot of young kids had looked up to him,” said Shawn. “He was well respected by the students as well as the faculty.”

Butters lived for 60 years in the house he built in Alta Loma, where he raised his three children. Known affectionately as the Butters Compound, the land comprised three residences, one of which housed Butters’ in-laws, along with his wife’s grandmother, who lived to be 108.

“He had a full life and accomplished a lot of things,” said Shawn.

Toward the end of his life, Butters began suffering from dementia and spent the last six months in an assisted care facility. It was there that he caught COVID-19, likely from an infected staff member.

The last thing he asked for was a dish of ice cream.

Butters is survived by his children Mark Butters, Timothy Shawn Butters and Cheryl Vosburgh, grandchildren Amanda, Beau, Kevin, Lindsey, Ian and Bethany, great grandchildren Kelly, Kate, Boson and Dalton, and sisters Margaret Ballentine, Frances Carey and Mary Ruth Reeves. He was preceded in death by his wife.

By Jessica Gelt
Los Angeles Times, 11-16-2020