

**SOUTHERN PACIFIC NEWSLETTER**  
Edited by Bill Fowler  
October - November 2023



**Ilah Jo Harem**  
**April 10, 1935 ~ September 6, 2023**

Jo Harem passed away in Eugene, Oregon on September 6, 2023.

Ilah Jo Coleman was born April 10, 1935 in Broken Bow, Oklahoma to Kathleen Strait Coleman and William Greer Coleman. Her three siblings were William Grant, Betty Cox, and Ruth Ferguson.

Jo attended Willamette High School in Eugene where she met Ben Harem. They married on May 13, 1951 in Eugene. They were blessed to celebrate 67 years of marriage before Ben's death in 2019. They had one daughter, Kathy Janzen, of Eugene.

Jo retired from Southern Pacific after 30 years of service as a stenographer. In retirement Jo and Ben enjoyed RVing, antique collecting, and their family.

Jo and Ben were early members of Fairfield Church of the Nazarene. They were baptized there and serve in many capacities over the years.

Jo is survived by her sister, Ruth Ferguson of Terrebonne, Oregon; daughter Kathy; and granddaughter-in-love Jackie Janzen Smith (Justin) and her parents Randy and Kelley Janzen of Roseburg. She was predeceased by her brother, Grant, sister Betty Cox, and son-in-law John Janzen.

Editor's request: When changing email addresses, please send your new address to [billfowler@southernpacificjourney.org](mailto:billfowler@southernpacificjourney.org).

**Richard Reule**  
**February 25, 1944 ~ September 6, 2023**

Richard Reule passed away in Rio Linda, California on September 6, 2023.

He was born in Sacramento, California on February 25, 1944. Richard retired from Southern Pacific after forty years of service.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 37 years, Darlene Marie (Marrow) Reule and parents, Rienhold (Ray) and Ula Reule.

Richard is survived by his son, Dewain Cummings; daughter Cynthia Casey; five grandchildren; brother John Lee Reule; and sisters Janet May (Reule) Cassinelli and Diane Lousie (Reule) Moore.



**Richard McGrath**  
**1944 ~ 2023**

His younger days as the son of much respected Colonel Thomas McGrath and Millie McGrath were spent at various army posts in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Kansas and the Netherlands, always coming home to Jamestown, Rhode Island, a home he loved dearly.

After joining the Air Force, he discovered Illinois and spent his leave in Chicago, where he met his future wife, Shirley. The two of them joined the migration of young people to San Francisco and enjoyed the excitement of that special time. In 1968, they married at City Hall and shortly thereafter decided to return to Illinois where Rich was hired by the Rock Island Railroad. He was embraced by Shirley's family and loved them deeply. He was not as fond of the Chicago winters where he had to work outside all night so the decision was made to return to San Francisco and hire out on Southern Pacific Railroad.

His precious baby girl Kelly brightened his days in San Francisco, Mill Valley and San Rafael and his son Tom completed the family in Santa Venetia ever giving his dad reasons to be proud.. A better father could not be found as he instilled a love of nature, a strong work ethic, respect for others and a deep faith to his children through travel, music, stories, and example.

As a conductor at Amtrak, he worked out of Oakland most of his career. Many commendations were received by passengers, especially those on the Coast Starlight, who appreciated Rich's well researched commentary of the spectacular geography on that route. His efforts were also noted in articles in various publications, including Conte Nast Magazine. He served as vice president for the United Transportation Union. He passed his love of trains to his son who chose to be a locomotive engineer, as well as colleagues, members of the Napa Valley Railroad Club, the Cub Scouts, his son's classmates, and many others.

He was also a proud member of the Marin Search and Rescue team and spent many hours day and night serving wherever needed. After retiring from that service, he joined the maintenance staff at the Marin Civic Center and volunteered to paint, help with parking at the Fair annually and many other miscellaneous duties. His favorite was when he was asked to raise and lower the flags on the Avenue of The

Flags. What an honor that was for him and he did it diligently for many years with great dignity and pride. He also spent many enjoyable hours volunteering with Friends of China Camp, the Civic Center Station Plan, and the Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association.

When he was not volunteering, he enjoyed watching the Giants, the 49ers, the Sharks, and the CAL Bears. Rich and Shirley had season tickets to the Bears for eight glorious seasons.

Rich is survived by his wife of fifty-five years, Shirley; his daughter Kelly McGrath and his son Thomas McGrath; and his much loved Rhode Island cousin Barbara Cournoyer

**Wanted: Oral histories of former Southern Pacific System employees. If you wish to contribute, please contact Bill Fowler at [billfowler@southernpacificjourney.org](mailto:billfowler@southernpacificjourney.org).**



**Gregory "Greg" Lynn Wahl  
January 30, 1950 ~ August 22, 2023**

On August 22, 2023, Gregory "Greg" Lynn Wahl, 73, passed away suddenly amongst the company of his railroad family.

Greg was born January 30, 1950, in Bakersfield, California and graduated from Foothill High School. After graduation he started working for Southern Pacific and was recently recognized for over 50 years of service by Union Pacific, as a locomotive engineer.

Known as G. L. Wahl by his co-workers, railroading was his true passion. He would show up to work with a bag overflowing with candy, a huge smile, and welcoming spirit. Greg had a great work ethic and was very altruistic. Whether it was tirelessly volunteering decades ago to build the Kern County Soccer Park or changing your car oil, you could count on him. While his railroad co-workers might

disagree, Greg was not a man of many words, he showed you love with his acts of service... often with a side of ice cream.

Greg is survived by his wife, Debbie Patrick and son, Nick Patrick. His legacy lives on through many generations. His four children, Jonathan (Angie) Wahl, Michele Lancaster (Rick) Watkin, Preston (Amy) Wahl and Jaclyn Ramirez; ten grandchildren; and three great grandchildren. Greg is survived by all four of his siblings, Diana (Craig) Combs, Tim (Cindy) Wahl, Marilyn (Randy) Judd, and David (Beth) Wahl. He is preceded by his parents Johannes and Bonnie Wahl.

Editor's note: Paul Turney pointed out that Greg was saluted by Union Pacific for attaining fifty years of service: [https://www.up.com/aboutup/community/inside\\_track/greg-wahl-50yr-it-220527.htm](https://www.up.com/aboutup/community/inside_track/greg-wahl-50yr-it-220527.htm).

**Charles Dean Russum**  
**January 23, 1938 ~ July 14, 2023**

Charles was born to Malcolm and Juanita Russum on January 23, 1938, in Truman Arkansas.

He was a father to eight and a grandfather to many. He was a recent widower to his beloved wife, Marilyn Adele Russum (Flynn), who he cherished deeply.

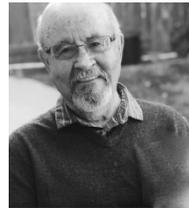
Charles was raised a Christian and held strong and loving values. He had two careers. He was an Air Force veteran where he was a carpenter. Later in life, Charles began working in freight operations for Southern Pacific, and he subsequently retired as a conductor from the Union Pacific after 40 years of combined service working on trains operating up and down the central California coastline.

He spent many nights away from home while on duty, so his wife could spend time with the children and "hold down the fort" at home. Charles never complained about his responsibilities and inspired those around him

with his natural resilience in overcoming obstacles.

He will be remembered greatly for his rich unbridled laugh, amazing BBQs, train stories, an appreciation for bluegrass music, spirit of endless adventure, and genuine and true generosity of love that he was unafraid to share with anyone around him.

If you have an interest in the history of Southern Pacific, please consider joining the Southern Pacific Railroad History Center: <https://www.splives.org/plans-pricing>.



**Felipe Calvillo**

**January 1, 1928 ~ October 18, 2023**

Felipe was born in Aguascalientes, Mexico and resided in Sacramento, California for 68 years, passed peacefully surrounded by his family leaving behind a legacy of devotion and inspiration.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Socorro Calvillo and son, Robert Calvillo. He is survived by his sons, Phillip and Jerry Calvillo, and his daughter, Grace Anglin (Rick). Felipe was a loving grandfather to Bryce Anglin and Karla Horton (Johnny), and a cherished great-grandfather to Devan, Jayden, Jorden, Julian, and Jaxon.

Felipe devoted 37 years of his life to Southern Pacific and retired as a tower operator. He found joy in exploring the world with his beloved wife. His dedication to family, strong work ethic and zest for life were admired by all who knew him.

Felipe (Chuy) will be deeply missed and remembered with love and affection by all who had the privilege of sharing his remarkable journey in this world.