

**SOUTHERN PACIFIC NEWSLETTER**  
**Edited by Bill Fowler**  
**September 2022**



Loel Ferol Ruoff Jr.  
April 7, 1932 ~ July 23, 2022

Loel Ferol Ruoff Jr. passed away in Grass Valley, California on July 23, 2022 at the age of 90. He was born in Alameda, California on April 7, 1932, the only child of Loel F. and Lillian (Blynagle) Ruoff.

Loel graduated from Castlemont High School in Oakland, California, and earned an art scholarship to the California College of Arts and Crafts, in Berkley, California. He served in the Air Force Reserves, training at Hamilton Air Force Base and was stationed at Camp Stoneman in Pittsburgh, California.

Loel started his thirty-year career with Southern Pacific in 1950 and married his beloved wife, Donna Norris, the following year. Upon being transferred to Colfax, California in 1962, Donna and Loel built their home and raised five children. Loel had an instrumental part in revitalizing the Colfax Ballpark in the 1960s, where the family enjoyed many summers playing and watching games. He played fastpitch softball for the Colfax Fireballs, as well as coached his children in softball and baseball. He was a gifted handyman with no job too big to tackle and enjoyed helping others with their projects.

During every Christmas season during the 1980s and 90s, one could find him spreading joy as a true Santa's helper at local businesses and private parties. Above all, family was the most important to him. He loved hosting huge

family gatherings throughout the years and all the chaos that went with it.

Over the years, Loel and Donna moved to various parts of California between Salinas and San Diego, seeking employment opportunities. Eventually they moved to Auburn, California where they live for eighteen years before moving to Winston, Oregon in 2005. In 2019, they relocated to Nevada City, California to be closer to family.

He was a member of Madison Masonic Lodge 23 A.F. & A.M. in Grass Valley.

Loel is survived by his wife of seventy-one years, Donna Ruoff; five children, Tim (Sandy) Ruoff of Manteca, California, Debbie (Bob) Sturgill of Athol, Idaho, Susan (Gary) Sharpe of Nevada City, David (Jenny) Ruoff of Roseville, California, and Janice Lake of Roseville; ten grandchildren; and fifteen great-grandchildren. He is also survived by sister-in-law Shirley Reynolds of Walnut Creek, California and brother-in-law Hal Norris of Phoenix, Arizona, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Want to learn more about the history of Southern Pacific and support the efforts of the Southern Pacific History Center? If so, please consider joining the organization. It is easy to do. Just click on the following link and choose your membership level: <https://www.splives.org/join>.



John Quijada Magdaleno  
October 23, 1943 ~ July 23,  
2022

John Q. Magdaleno, of Roseville, California, passed away unexpectedly. John was born in Yuma, Arizona, and moved to Roseville with his parents and siblings in 1954. John attended Atlantic Street School and graduated from Roseville High School in 1962. He served in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1967 and served in combat in Vietnam. John's last duty assignment was with the 278th Signal Company in Tuy Hoa and Pleiku. His job entailed installation, operation, and maintenance of both general and multipurpose portable generators and radio equipment. John earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and Vietnam Campaign Medal.

John was an electrician for Southern Pacific/Union Pacific and retired after thirty-five years of service.

John was preceded in death by his parents John R. Magdaleno and Mary Q. Magdaleno Estrada; sister Sylvia Cervantes; and brother-in-law Frank Cervantes. He is survived by siblings Andrew Magdaleno, Albert (Sandra) Magdaleno, Yvonne (Clarence) Cross, and Avon (Robert) McCormick, all of Roseville. John also leaves behind Trina Schendel of Twin Falls, Idaho, numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins, and several uncles and aunts.



Jeff W. Hutcherson  
February 15, 1932 – July 25, 2022

Jeffie (Jeff) Warner Hutcherson passed away in Memphis, Tennessee July 25, 2022. He is survived by his wife of sixty-six years, Joy Wilkinson Hutcherson, and children, Lesa Hutcherson Stanfill (Don) and Gary Cavin Hutcherson (Michelle). He also leaves grandchildren, Amy Stanfill Spicer (Patrick), Bethany Stanfill, Cavin Hutcherson, and Kelsey Hutcherson, and one great-grandson, Shields Spicer.

Jeff was born to George Buel and Frances Arbie (Young) Hutcherson on February 15, 1932, in Enville, Tennessee. He was the second of four children born, and admittedly spoiled by his grandparents, Clarence Cordie and Ada Colbert Hutcherson and Issac Wesley and Mary "Maggie" Emmaline (Austin) Young from the time he was born. He grew up farming corn, soybeans, and cotton, and carried a devotion to the land throughout his life. He graduated from Chester County High School in 1950, and on Thanksgiving Day made his way to Memphis, ultimately securing a job with the Cotton Belt. He loved working in the railroad industry and was integral in bringing LeTourneau to Memphis. Jeff was a long-standing member of the Memphis Traffic club, having served as its president for a term. On August 31, 1989, he retired after forty years of Cotton Belt/Southern Pacific service, having advanced from his beginnings as messenger boy to southeast manager of intermodal sales.

Jeff served his country as a member of the United States Air Force. He volunteered at a young age and was honorably discharged in 1952.

Jeff loved his family and would stop at nothing to sacrifice for them. From driving through the icy Memphis night to retrieve Lesa's doll for Christmas morning or faithfully making sure Joy got to her hair appointment every week, Jeff never failed the people he loved. He was a member of Grace Evangelical Church. Jeff and Joy provided great support to Evangelical Christian School in its early years - where he would send his children and grandchildren. No sacrifice was too big for Jeff to make in devotion to his family. His constant curiosity and engineering mind gave him a love for learning and made him adept at any "do-it-yourself" task. He ultimately built his own second home at his beloved family farm in Enville. No car was good enough for him if it was not a Ford, and the staff at the Ford dealership knew him well. Jeff always believed the best in people, even if they did not see it in themselves. His humility and dedicated work ethic always had him "do right" even if no one was looking. He loved to laugh – out loud and often, especially in a quite movie

theatre. He brought great joy to many, many lives.

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



**Lewis Gammon**  
**August 15, 1922 ~ April 30, 2022**

Lewis E. Gammon completed what he called his "journey down the road of life." Lewis was an incredible man inspiring us all with his character, lifetime devotion and service to friends, family, faith and country by participating purposefully in these pillars of life.

Lewis was born in Richmond, Virginia and married his high school sweetheart, Sara Cogle. Together they shared their journey for 72 years, 7 months, 14 days. As a World War II veteran, Lewis was part of the Headquarters 385th Field Artillery Battalion, 104th Infantry "Timberwolf Division" from 1943 to 1945, receiving a Purple Heart and several other honors including the French Legion of Honor.

After World War II ended, Lewis and Sara moved to Bakersfield, California, where he dedicated his career to Southern Pacific ultimately rising to chief special agent in San Francisco. Following frequent moves as his career progressed, Lewis and Sara always found purpose to be involved with their faith and community.

Lewis was preceded in death by his wife Sara and daughter Carolyn Ann. He is survived by daughters Susan Hennig (Greg) and Janet Wildgen (Kevin); five grandchildren Shanna, Michael, Blake, Kent, and Claire, and two great-grandchildren, Elodie and Alice.