

About Nate Shargo, The Spirit of Avenue C

During the 1950s and 1960s Nate Shargo was the Lieutenant (today's Captain) at the Avenue C Beach in Redondo. Avenue C was the hang out for Redondo High School students. Everyone knew Nate. He was the captain who kept order and organization on the beach. He was in charge from Redondo Pier to Torrance Beach at the edge of Palos Verdes.

His Lifeguard crew admired him for his competitive spirit and his loyalty. He was honored by his crew and friends (500 people) at the Hermosa Beach Surfers Walk of Fame ceremony on July 29, 2007. That day he also celebrated with everyone his 97th birthday. He was the oldest living Lifeguard. He rose to the occasion that day, taking time to talk with everyone for six hours.

Nate Shargo was born August 2, 1910 and passed away peacefully in his sleep at 1:00 a.m. on November 20, 2007. Nate is survived by his wife, Edna Shargo and his devoted sister-in-law, Jean Shargo. Nate had remarkable energy. After retiring in 1968 at the age of 58, he painted houses until age 85 – something he also did as a young man in Philadelphia. Nate also became an accomplished, self-taught artist. He could copy the master artists. He was able to sell many of his paintings.

Nate had a brother Sam who had come to California to see if he could find work. Bimi Bath, a natural spring pool on the west side of Los Angeles had openings. Sam was hired and became one of the first professional Lifeguards. Sam wrote to Nate, saying he should come to California and bring Mom with him. Sam had a place to live for everyone and told Nate that Lifeguard work was available. For the next 77 years, Nate would have a love affair with the southern California beaches.

The state beach below Pacific Palisades was their hang out. The two brothers beat everyone in volleyball during the late 1930s. When WW II started in 1941, Nate joined the Coast Guard. He trained dogs that would accompany the Coast Guard men who protected the shorelines. Nate loved dogs and had a way with them. He was one of the best dog trainers. His affinity with dogs remained until his last moments. A few hours before he passed away, his sister-in-law Jean Shargo's dog, Marie Bonnie Jean Angel Face, was by his side, licking his hand and later refusing to eat her usual morning meal.

After the war, Nate was offered a dog training job. Although a natural with handling dogs, Nate's heart was in being a professional Lifeguard. He was hired for summer work, eventually became permanent. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1952.