

8/8/16

Bill Powers Obituary;

Bill Powers, 69, of Paradise, CA, a retired Ocean Lifeguard Specialist for the Los Angeles County Fire Department died this past week. Bill will be remembered for his distinguished service of over 30 years within the lifeguard family. Bill was an amazing sportsman, explorer and adventurer. He was a long time resident of Mammoth Mountain, who loved Skiing, fishing, hunting, and most of all, his golden retrievers. His lifeguard family will always remember him as the "off duty specialist".

A friend from '*Meals on Wheels*' was checking on Bill at his home, and found him unconscious. Medics transported him to the local hospital, but he didn't survive. The cause of death is yet to be determined.

In memory;

Bill Powers grew up in Azusa, CA. where he became an All American swimmer at Azusa High School. He swam for Citrus College and won the school's first state championship for the 100 yd. breaststroke. In his early youth he developed a love of fishing and hunting. Bill served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Hawaii, where he continued his passion for water sports and skydiving, making over 300 jumps over Oahu. He spent many days surfing the North Shore and made many friends of the local legends. After his military service, Bill became an L.A. City Ocean Lifeguard in the early 70's and resided at the Doman Manor on 25th street in Santa Monica. In addition to lifeguarding, Bill was training golden retrievers, surfing, sailing, hunting, fishing, and skiing. During the merger of L.A. City and County lifeguard services, Bill started guarding more of the County beaches and became a permanent lifeguard. At that time he was living at Topanga Beach and working the Northern Section. Bill eventually purchased a home on Old Mammoth Rd. where he spent most of his time when not working the beach.

Bill's friend of 54 years, Harold Behnke, had this to say, "Powers was the original extreme sports participant. He was a skydiver, paraglider, skier, snow boarder, motor cycle rider, hunter, fisherman, surfer, sailor." Harold noted, "His love of golden retrievers and his training methods produced some of the greatest 4-legged companions a human being could ask for. His compassion for the outdoors was unsurpassed." Bill was always a gracious, humble person who found great satisfaction in helping people, especially in passing on his skills in sporting endeavors. He was extremely unselfish. Bill's friend for more than 40 years, John Thomas, shared that in addition to being an all American

breast stroker, Bill was also a blazingly fast sprinter who once bested Olympic champion Zac Zorin in the 50 yard free-style.

When Bill retired from the lifeguard service he moved full time to his Mammoth home, which had become the place for lifeguards to visit and play year around. For years, Bill was referred to by his fellow guards as, "The Off Duty Specialist". In retirement Bill was the ultimate sportsman. Up before dawn, he'd load up his dogs in his truck and take them to an open field to train and exercise them, then drop by the local coffee shop for a cup. By 6:30am he'd drop off the dogs at home and either hit the mountain, go fishing, paragliding, or off-roading; Sometimes all in one day. Several years ago Bill started feeling his body beginning to fail him. He finally sought medical attention and was diagnosed with a form of neuropathy, which may have been brought on by traumatic and/or repetitive stress injuries. He underwent spinal surgery to relieve some of his pain, but his mobility continued to decline. Bill realized his increasing limitations, and sold his Mammoth home and relocated further down the mountain below the snow line in Paradise, CA. He had a beautiful view of the mountains and valley, with plenty of fresh air. He had his boat for fishing lake Crowley, ATV's for exploring, and his cherished dog, Cowboy, for companionship. It was with great sadness his friends witnessed Bill's decline in his last years, but his spirit and enthusiasm for life remained unbowed. Recently Bill became house bound and needed a walker to get around. He had difficulty speaking and could no longer drive. Last week Bill was found unconscious on the floor of his home, by a 'Meals on Wheels' worker, who had become a friend. The medics transported him to the local hospital but Bill passed away the following day. Bill was an amazing sportsman, explorer and adventurer.

Happy trails to Bill! Until we meet again. We will all miss our old friend and his zest for adventure and life.

Aloha,
Buddy Bohn

Thanks to input from:

John Thomas
Randy DeGregori
Jim Dowman
Robbie Dick
Harold Benke
Beth Bohn