



TIME AGAIN

A monthly publication of the Fallbrook Historical Society
1730 S. Hill Ave. fallbrookhistoricalsociety.org
February 2023

A Tribute Newsletter in Memory of Don McLean



Photo above left, shows Don McLean on Oct. 8, cutting the ribbon for the official opening of the first phase of the interpretative trail on the Reche Schoolhouse grounds (see photo at right). The new trail leads from the main pathway to the more than 100-year-old Hindorff shed. Assisting in the ribbon cutting are Fallbrook Historical Society members, from left, President Roy Moosa, Scott Spencer, Pat Saunders and Mary Belton.

In every family, in every community, there are torchbearers that light the path forward and, regardless of challenges, they continue to lead. On Jan. 31, an undauntable torchbearer for the McLean family – and the Fallbrook community at large – was lost with the passing of Don McLean, Jr.

Don was a relentless advocate for the town in which he was born. He served for 24 years with the North County Fire Department, rising through the ranks and retiring as a captain. Throughout his firefighting career, he mentored countless firefighters and inspired others through his selfless actions and genuine kindness.

One of the words most often associated with Don is “philanthropy.” Like his father before him, Don was a passionate member, volunteer, and supporter of a long list of organizations, including the Fallbrook Masonic Lodge, International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, Fallbrook High School Alumni Association, and of course the Fallbrook Historical Society.



This photo of Don was taken after he was honored as the historical society's 2020 Member of the Year.

(Continued on Page 2)

Don McLean Tribute

(Continued from Page 1)

He served as a board member for the historical society and was responsible for facilities at the Heritage Center and the Reche Schoolhouse, for which he was particularly passionate. He also served as a member of the Asset and Administrative committees. In addition, Don served as curator of the Gem and Mineral collection, located on the lower level of the Heritage Center.

Don's commitment never wavered, even after suffering a stroke and heart transplant in 2011. In recent years, his presence at almost all historical society events was a welcome surprise. Sometimes in a wheelchair, sometimes walking with a cane and assistance from his loving wife Marcie, he was there, despite any discomfort he was feeling. There was never any doubt about his whole-hearted love and support for the society.

In recognition of his contributions, he was named Member of the Year in 2020. The Fallbrook Christmas Parade, in which honorees ride in historical society "floats, was canceled that year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, but he was a proud participant in the 2021 parade.

He continued, until his passing, to promote his "wish list" for continued improvements at the Reche Schoolhouse site. (See box on Page 1.) In honor of Don and his dreams, the Fallbrook Historical Society is accepting donations earmarked to make those dreams a reality, and steps are being taken to name the trail in his honor. Donations may be sent to the Fallbrook Historical Society, P.O. Box 1375, Fallbrook, CA 92088. Please state your wishes that funds be used for this specific purpose.

Although Don is no longer with us in body, his indomitable spirit will live on forever. He leaves behind a legacy of sincere love, compassion and philanthropy that will continue to light the way for others to follow.

Don is survived by his loving wife Marcie; sons Kris (Kristy) and Matt (Trina); daughters Lauren (Scott), Tiffany, Jessica (Nick) and Nicole; 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Please find his full obituary and his online guestbook at www.berry-bellandhall.com/obits.

Don's Wish List

Don was passionate about preserving and improving the historic Reche Schoolhouse and the grounds on which it sits. His wish list includes:

- Continuation of trail improvements throughout the property and building of an "Indian Village"
- Addition of signage to capture this history of the area with emphasis on the contributions of early Native Americans
- Continued upkeep of the historic schoolhouse building

Wish List Donors

A sincere thank you to all those who have donated to the Fallbrook Historical Society in honor of DonMcLean. Donors, to date, include:

- Mary Tunnicliff - \$100
- Pat Saunders - \$100
- Jeff Duhachek - \$100
- Marianne Dickey - \$250
- Tom Frew - \$200
- Lynn Kay - \$100
- Pat Showalter - \$100
- Leo Romero - \$100



Remembering Don McLean in Photos and Words



Don with Scott Spencer and Pat Saunders at the Oct. 8, 2022 annual Awards Program and Walking Trail Ribbon Cutting.



"Don's warrior spirit touched us all. He will live in our hearts until we meet again at the other side of the trail. We can only hope to carry on his dreams and visions for his beloved community, which we discussed many times when he was with us."

- Scott Spencer

"Don was the one who recruited me to serve as the curator for our main museum and gift shop in 2020. We worked closely on many projects since then. He is already missed very much, but we will continue to honor his memory and visions."

- Pat Saunders



Don rides proudly in the 2021 Fallbrook Christmas Parade with his wife Marcie. Don was honored as the Fallbrook Historical Society Member of the Year in 2020, but due to COVID, the parade that year was canceled. He had his seat of honor in the 2021 parade.

Don McLean, Jr.

Teenage Memories

The Fallbrook native was honored for his selfless dedication and commitment to supporting the goals of the historical society.

In the article about his award, he talked about growing up in Fallbrook. Here is the excerpt:

"There was a friendly rivalry between the Fallbrook, Bonsall and Rainbow boys. Don borrowed his father's pickup (one Halloween) and installed standing plywood sheets in the back to act as cover when firing. Then he dug up the eggs that had been buried weeks before so they would ripen into stinky ammo."

He picked up the Fallbrook guys and they parked at the battleground on Main Street to wait for the Bonsall and Rainbow armies. Just then the sheriff pulled alongside them and delivered a lecture about the dangers of throwing objects from a moving car and other Halloween pranks.

As the sheriff was warning the Fallbrook boys, a cabbage flew out of the darkness from where the rivals were hiding, and smashed into the police cruiser. The sheriff stopped mid-sentence, bellowed 'get 'em,' and drove away. The battle was on! That is the kind of small town history that is delightful to record and makes Fallbrook a special place."

Remembering Don McLean in Photos and Words



Don oversees reconstruction of the walkway leading into the Heritage Center.

“The things I admired most about Don were his perseverance and his dedication. Through all the health issues he dealt with, he still managed to attend Zoom meetings from his bed and remained very involved to the very end. His caring and involvement are qualities that are admirable and rare.”

- Roy Moosa



Don and Mary Belton having fun at the 2015 Dia De Los Muertos event hosted by the Mason Lodge. “He loved this annual event,” said Mary.

“Don will be sorely missed by all who knew him, and especially those of us who had the privilege of working with him.”

- Michael McGuire

“His absence will be felt for many years.”

- Marianne Dickey

“Don was one of the kindest men I’ve ever met. I will miss him dearly.”

- Mary Belton



Don with his wife Marcie and members of their family at the historical society’s 2021 Whistle Stop Christmas Open House.



Don and Marcie at the historical society’s 2016 Annual Awards Ceremony.