



Wackman Park History

Wackman Park was named after Howard Putney Wackman II, who was born July 21, 1938 and died May 22, 1982. Mr. Wackman was born and raised in Elk Grove on a 1,430 acre ranch that had been in his family for 4 generations. He graduated from Elk Grove High School in 1956 and from UC Davis in 1960. He worked the farm all his life and his sons continued the tradition.

In 1959 Howard married Marilyn Wilson, his High School sweetheart. Marilyn graduated from California State University, Sacramento, and taught at Franklin Elementary until their first son was born in 1962. Together they had 3 children, Howard Wackman III, Mike, and Alan, who are now all married. His oldest son is the father of his 1 grandchild, Howard Wackman IV. They all remember him as a loving, giving, marvelous father, to whom family life was very important. He was always a very busy man, 1 who could never sit still. In addition to his many professional and civic involvements, Howard spent many years in an active and leadership role in the local baseball league with his sons. He became a member of the Elk Grove School District's committees on finance and year-round schooling. He also enjoyed flying and water-skiing.

Always excelling and active in his chosen field, he was named to the Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha Zeta (honorary Agriculture fraternity), and Phi Kappa Fraternities while at UC Davis. After graduation he was chosen by the Council of California Growers to be a member of the Agricultural Education Foundation Program which gave him the chance to travel to Europe and Mexico and throughout the United States studying various facets of agriculture. He graduated from this program in 1963. In 1969 he became Farm Director for KXTV Channel 10, where he originated "Focus on Farming". During the same period he was Vice President of the California Farm Bureau Scholarship Federation, and in 1973 added membership on the Board of Directors of the California State Farm Bureau to his involvements. For 3 years, from 1974 to 1977, Mr. Wackman was also a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat Animal Research Advisory Committee. Then in 1977 he was appointed by the Governor of California to the State Industrial Welfare Commission, where he served until 1981. During the years of 1980-81 Howard was President of the International Farmers Association for Education (A program that brought farmers together from all over the world to learn about farming techniques in the United States.). He had been on the Board of Directors of this organization since 1975. He also received an appointment in 1982 from John Block, then Secretary of Agriculture, to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee of the United States, but was unable to serve due to failing health.

Mr. Wackman was Vice President and Board Member of the 52nd District Agriculture Association which sponsors the Sacramento County Fair and the California State Fair. He was awarded Distinguished Service Awards by the Farm Bureaus of both California and Kings County in 1982. In 1988, after his death, he became one of the first inductees into the Elk Grove High School "Hall of Fame". And in honor of his education, the California Farm Bureau created a scholarship in his name for students in the agriculture field.

The information within this document was created at the time of park dedication and may not be current.