

ARBOR DAY AT ROTARY PARK – REMEMBERING EARLY ROTARIANS

Walter Edward Keefe

Walter Keefe was born September 22, 1886 in Chicago, Illinois. He came to California several years after his first marriage in 1915 and went to work for the Southern Counties Gas Company, the predecessor to the Southern California Gas Company. He became a District Manager for the gas company, assigned to the district office here in Monrovia. He hosted the organizational meeting for the Rotary Club of Monrovia at his place of business, 114 E. Lemon Avenue, on June 29, 1922. He was one of the twenty five charter members of the Rotary Club of Monrovia, and served as its first president during the 1922-1923 Rotary Year. Keefe was later transferred to Pasadena. He lived in Orange County, California in retirement, and died there March 8, 1964.

George Julius Carlson

George Carlson was born August 13, 1901 in Brookings County, South Dakota. After serving in the United States Navy during World War I, he relocated to Southern California, where he married Mary Kathryn Pruitt. They were the parents of one son, George Murray Carlson, also a member of the Rotary Club of Monrovia. George was inducted into the Rotary Club of Monrovia in 1930, and he served as president during the 1938-1939 Rotary Year. For many years he was an insurance agent with the Kellogg-Blain-Carlson Agency. He was the first member of the Rotary Club of Monrovia to serve as a District Governor, serving during the 1956-1957 Rotary Year. George Carlson passed away November 19, 1994, and is buried with Kathryn at Live Oak Cemetery. The George J. Carlson Award is presented annually to an outstanding member of the Rotary Club of Monrovia in recognition of their service to the club.

William Thomas Ryan

William “Billy” Ryan was born January 7, 1931 in Iowa. Billy found his way to Monrovia, where he became a clerk at the ‘Leven Oaks Hotel, for many years the meeting place of the Rotary Club of Monrovia. It was an important association; many years later Billy was to own and operate the hotel himself. Billy married the former Judy Yoder, and they lived in both Arcadia and Monrovia. Billy was inducted into the Rotary Club of Monrovia in 1968, and served as president during the 1972-1973 Rotary Year. Billy was the second member of the Rotary Club of Monrovia to serve as a District Governor; he served during the 1982-1983 Rotary Year. Billy died January 26, 1991, and is buried at Live Oak Cemetery in Monrovia. Billy is memorialized annually by providing a scholarship for an outstanding football player at Monrovia High School.

*By Steve Baker, City Historian
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