

Arno Gale Hammett

1932 – 2016

Obituary

Arno Gale Hammett was born on June 28, 1932 on a ranch near Post, a small town in west Texas, to Monte and Victoria Hammett. The large cattle ranch was owned by his grandfather, John James, and has been in family hands for over 112 years.

Gale's parents moved their family to New Mexico looking for work during the depression. In 1943 the family moved to Barstow, California when his father was transferred with the railroad. Gale graduated from Barstow High School in 1950 and it's there that he met his future wife, Laverne. They married in March of 1951 and went on to have five children. Gale and Laverne shared 53 years of marriage before Laverne passed away in 2004. Gale was a dedicated caregiver for Laverne during her struggle with Parkinson's disease. He was blessed when he met his current wife Lola to share the remainder of his life with.

Gale worked at a Chevron station and later delivered milk to support his young family of 4 children in Barstow. He took night classes at Barstow Junior College and moved his family to Fresno in 1962, where he got his degree at Fresno State. While attending Fresno State, he drove a semi-truck to the Yosemite Valley at night to deliver milk.

After earning his degree, Gale worked for Montgomery Ward in Merced in their management-training program. He was soon hired by Mobil Oil and spent six months in Los Angeles for training, before being named district manager in Bakersfield, where he moved his family in 1966 and lived until his death.

A severe case of Valley Fever and a changing industry forced Gale to search for a new profession. He decided to sell real estate and was still actively working until he passed away.

Gale never knew a stranger and enjoyed working around people. It never ceased to amaze his wife and children how they could be almost anywhere and run into someone he knew.

Rotary president, Scout Master and Junior Achievement leader are some of the many ways Gale served his community. His parents and siblings were founders of the First Baptist Church in Barstow, holding the first services in their living room. The church recently celebrated its 71st anniversary.

Gale survived many serious and life threatening illnesses during his lifetime. He contracted polio at age four and spinal meningitis at 11. He told his daughter about the loneliness he felt during his illnesses when he had to be quarantined for so long. After he moved to Bakersfield he contracted Valley Fever. He spent many days in the hospital and several months at home recovering.

Gale was preceded in death by his wife Laverne, his parents, his 2 brothers and his daughter Diana. He is survived by his wife, Lola, daughter, Sharon, three sons, Monte, Glenn and Greg and their spouses, along with 13 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. He is also survived by Lola's family, which he had the good fortune of knowing and enjoying.

A graveside service will take place today at 10 a.m. at Hillcrest Memorial Park.

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