

Robert Frederick Hilburn was born in Long Beach on February 20, 1951, and died in Barstow Community Hospital on May 3, 2019.

He was the only son of Clydine and Robert Hilburn II who married in 1935.

Clydine Ann Bishop Hilburn Cooper was born in 1919 in Bisbee, Arizona, and died in Barstow in 2003 Robert F. Hilburn II was born in 1915 in Tucson, Arizona, and died in Alameda in 1960.

### **Robert Frederick Hilburn III**

by Steve Smith

On May 3rd this Museum and this desert and I lost a good friend—Bob Hilburn. Bob got started in his interest in our local history and paleontology at nine years old when he convinced his mother and dad to take him to volunteer at the Calico Early Man Site. There he met Dr. Louis Leakey and “Dee” Simpson, Site Director. Bob’s association with Dr. Leakey continued throughout the years and in high school he studied for a semester at Exeter College in England with a letter of recommendation from Dr. Leakey.

After high school Bob had many adventures, including being a ranch hand for a time with Lee Berry of the Slash X Ranch where he spent some time living in the desert in a teepee. He even worked on a fish canning ship in Alaska for awhile. No matter where he went he always ended up back in the Mojave Desert to spend time exploring and promoting our area.

He had numerous terms as President of the Mojave River Valley Museum and worked to reproduce ice age bones and footprints that make up several of our displays. He was one of the driving forces behind our Gaddis Blacksmith Shop and it is because of his insistence and perseverance that we have the Mojave River Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association here.

When I think of Bob I think of some of the great stories he told me: One day Don Putnam came into the museum all excited because he had found a genuine Indian teepee out in the desert. Bob was sad to inform him that the teepee was his and when he moved back into town he never bothered tearing it down.

One day we heard that the Cambridge Museum in Apple Valley was closing and we arranged to get some artifacts from their collection. Bob and I went there and got a great tour and then loaded Bob's Jeep with all sorts of treasures. One nice piece was a three-toed horse foot and lower leg. We didn't trust it in the back of the Jeep so I agreed to keep it in my lap. On the way back, every time we hit a bump a piece of that horse bone would fall off and I would put it in my pocket. By the time we got back to Barstow I had more bones in my pocket than on the display. Bob said we could fix it but I had my doubts. To this day that display is still standing with all the bones where they should be.

So even though Bob is gone, please remember a good story or two about him in the coming days.

There will be no funeral services, but a Memorial Service is in the planning stages. We will let you know the final plans of that.