



Jim Hill
Class of 2016

Jim Hill graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1947, was a member of the Honor Society and played the trombone in the school band all four years. Being a talented musician, he was also a member of the Royal Tigers Swing Band that played at all OHS functions even though it was not officially a school band. This 16 piece band was a corporation founded in 1942 by Claude Wilson.

The Royal Tigers Swing Band also played at various community and area events and at most all dances throughout the North State. Jim was an alternate for the All-Stars band that played at the weekly Robinson Corner Saturday Night Dances and was instrumental in bringing world renowned trumpet player Louis Armstrong to Oroville to give a concert at the Municipal Auditorium. When not playing in bands, Jim delivered medical prescriptions by bicycle for a local pharmacy and sold tickets at the Empire Movie Theater.

Following graduation from OHS, Jim attended the University of California at Berkeley (Cal) for two years and played in their renowned marching band. In January of 1949, he played the trombone while marching with the band in the annual Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, CA. He was also a member of the Cal 8 Man Jazz Band that played at many Bay Area public and private events. After leaving Cal, Jim completed the Dale Carnegie Leadership and Sales course.

Jim's family owned and operated Hill Furniture from 1931 to 1988 and Jim was the primary owner/manager from 1950 until his retirement in 1988. With local friend and business man Bob Stern, they founded the Oroville Downtown Business Association (ODBA) in which Jim was active for 35 plus years. The focus of the ODBA was to promote shopping in Historic Downtown. The ODBA currently plays a major role in Feather Fiesta Days, The Salmon Festival, Community Christmas Tree Lighting, the Parade of Lights, and the Downtown Farmer's Market to name a few.

Jim's lifelong goal was to run the family business and serve the Oroville community, and that he did. He felt he could best serve Oroville by focusing his community service to the ODBA through promotional activities designed to increase public interest, improving the downtown environment, and by serving the local public schools.

Using his leadership abilities, Jim served as president of the Oroville Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Oroville Chamber of Commerce, and helped establish the "Little Miss Oroville" contest. He served as trustee in the Oroville City Elementary School District (OCESD) for 12 years and the Butte County Office of Education for eight years. As an OCESD trustee, Jim rarely missed any kind of school event during his tenure on that board.

In addition to the above, Jim was the chairman of the Community Concert Association, sponsored Little League teams, was involved with the Boy Scouts of America, and worked tirelessly on the committee for Beautification and Revitalization of Downtown Oroville.

Over the years, Jim helped bring many celebrities to town including Michael Landon of the TV hit show, "Bonanza", James Drury, of "The Virginian", and Brian Kelly of "Flipper" to serve as Grand Marshals of the Feather Fiesta Days Parade.

Carroll Johnson, 27-year Hill Furniture employee and great friend to Jim, wrote, "The opportunities of working for Jim and Hill Furniture were enormous for me personally. Jim supported my endeavors to further my education in public speaking and community service, along with interior design. He gave the same encouragement to all of his employees."

In 2001, Jim was featured as “The Personality” in the Oroville Mirror newspaper. The article ended with, “His dedication to Oroville is easily recognized and his continuing friendship to the community is a gift to us all.”

Jim passed away in 2015 and spent most of his life living in the family home, built by his parents on Canyon Highlands Drive. At that time, it was on the outskirts of town and only the seventh home in that area.

He leaves his wife Wilma, five children, 16 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.