



Norman "Buss" Roberts Class of 2017

Norman Roberts Jr, known to everyone as Buss, moved to Oroville with his mom and dad for his senior year of high school and graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in the class of 1943. He quarterbacked the undefeated football team, earned his Block O letter, and was a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

Following his graduation from OHS, Buss joined the United States Marine Corps (USMC) where he served until 1946, attaining the rank of Corporal, honored for his Rifle Marksmanship.

He then attended University of California, Davis (UCD) for 2 years, earning his BS degree in biology and his teaching credential from Chico State College in 1952. He was awarded his MA degree in administration and the Administrative Services Credential from California State University, Chico in 1973.

The year 1952, Buss launched a 34 year career in education with the Oroville Elementary School District (OCESD), as children were his true passion. He started as a 5th grade teacher at Bird Street School and went on to serve as principal at Burbank, Oakdale Heights and Ophir Schools. In addition to his being an educator, Buss was also a partner in the RX prune ranch he loved being outdoors and working the harvest during the summer. For many years, he also directed and ran a 10 day summer camp for underprivileged youth at Gold Lake. He did this strictly as a volunteer and over the years took many 6th graders on overnight camping trips to various locations in the north state. On these trips he was not only the organizer and chaperone, but served as cook as he loved preparing food for anyone who liked to eat. Cooking was also a passion for Buss as annually he did all the cooking for the Butte County School Administrators two big events. He was famous for his spaghetti sauce and chili!

Just being on a school site and doing the normal education things was not enough for Buss. In addition to running the camps already mentioned, he and his wife Lucille, took a group of local 6th grade students to Washington DC to attend the inauguration of President Ronald Reagan in 1980. He also transported students to all types of athletic events, both local and in other towns, wrote grants to purchase playground equipment that he installed on weekends and spent countless hours working and developing an athletic field at Ophir School which he named after one of his custodians. Whether in shirt and tie or jeans and baseball cap, Buss was happiest when doing whatever he could to enrich the lives of his students.

Among his many awards were being the first president of the Butte County School Administrators Association (BCAA), CTA Teacher of the Year and the BCAA Administrator of the Year. During his many years with OCESCD, he mentored several rookie principals.

Along with his career in education, Buss also had a very active career in public service. He was president of the Oroville Junior Chamber of Commerce from 1950-54, a member of the group that developed Table Mountain Golf Course, a founding member of Tri-Valley Growers Association, member of the Mosquito Abatement Board, the Northern California Golf Association, the Fellows Club of Oroville and Saint Thomas Church.

In 1980, he was elected to the Oroville City Council where he served for eight years and following his term was elected mayor of the city where he served his beloved community until 1993. During his five years as mayor, Buss also was a member of the League of California Cities and was instrumental in bringing new businesses to town that would provide quality jobs for local citizens. He was a key player in bringing Roplast, the Co-Generation Plant to Oroville and was involved in numerous community activities.

In a letter of support for Buss, former student, Jana Murphy Black writes, "Mr. Roberts is the 5th grade teacher everyone will remember for a very long time. Our class was very bonded to our teacher. I do believe he saw the potential of this group of ten year olds, and paved the way for fast track learning. Our Class of 1966 went on to produce 14 attorneys, six physicians, many, many teachers and many other successful business professionals. Many in our class are published authors. We remember Mr. Roberts with fondness and appreciation."

Buss passed away on March 11, 2012 in Sacramento and is survived by his wife Lucille, his daughters Amanda and Jennifer (son-in-law, Steve Sterling), and three grandchildren.