

## Notable central San Joaquin Valley deaths of 2014

The roll call of people with central San Joaquin Valley ties who died in 2014 includes names that loomed large in business, acting and sports.

There were the Bedrosian brothers, Ernest and Krikor, two-thirds of the foundation (along with surviving brother Kenneth) for the trend-setting National Raisin Co.

There was Richard Kiel, the 7-foot-2 “Jaws” of the James Bond movie franchise.

And there was Bertha Ragan Tickey, “Miss Softball” helped popularize the fast-pitch sport around the country at a time when women’s sports weren’t as accepted as they are now.

There also was tragedy — including two young California Highway Patrol officers killed in a crash while racing to a call, and the sad case of 85-year-old shoe shop owner George Sheklian, who died from injuries suffered when he was pushed to the ground by robbers rushing out of his neighbor’s gun shop.

Here are some of the notable Valley people who died in 2014:

### January

- Ernest Bedrosian, 80, farmer/co-founder National Raisin Company. Jan. 1
- Frank J. Creede Jr., 88, retired Fresno judge. Jan. 2
- George Zarounian, 93, car dealer/entrepreneur. Jan. 3
- Robert “Harry” Rogers, 84, pilot, master mechanic and co-founder of Rogers Helicopters. Jan. 16
- Steve Pilibos, 102, Fresno developer, west-side farmer. Jan. 21
- Joseph S. De Los Santos, 67, former Big Fresno Fair board member/retired Marine captain. Jan. 23
- Dr. Wayne Iwao Kodama, 52, dentist and farmer. Jan. 24

### February

- Cash Shank, 6, local posterboy for St. Jude Hospital. Feb. 6
- Joe Levy, 82, former Gottschalks CEO and community icon. Feb. 10
- Dorothy Renzi, 90, singer/teacher/arts activist. Feb. 12
- California Highway Patrol officers Juan Jaime Gonzalez, 33, and Brian Mitchio Law, 34, racing to a call when their patrol car crashed on Highway 99 in Kingsburg. Feb. 17

### March

- Leslie “Les” Sassano, 84, retired owner of Sassano’s Men’s Wear. March 4
- Michael Snyder, 49, president of Clovis Swim Club and a former Hoover High football/basketball coach. March 9

- Thomas Charles Kipps, 91, retired math professor at Fresno State. March 10

#### April

- Gary Lee Kumpe, 65, vice president of Fresno Plumbing & Heating. April 1
- Solomon Ray Wells, 61, retired Fresno police homicide detective. April 5
- John Ryle, 78, public relations and marketing, political consultant. April 9
- Bertha Ragan Tickey, 92, National Softball Hall of Famer. April 9
- Shigenori Nagao, 95, retired Selma farmer. April 13
- Richard Cleland, 85, retired dean of men and campus business manager at Fresno City College. April 17
- Thomas Randy McClintock, 62, McLane High graduate/fencer. April 17

#### May

- Victor Alan Karsner aka Dick Carr, 79, former TV & radio personality. May 5
- George Salwasser Jr., 38, raisin farmer shot and killed when he confronted thieves on his Kerman-area ranch. May 8
- Raymond D. Decker, 82, owner of Decker Ford. May 16

#### June

- Krikor Yeprad Bedrosian, 78, co-founder of National Raisin Co. June 9
- Daniel P. Bartell, 70, dean emeritus and professor at Fresno State. June 13
- Dr. Edward "Ed" Mosley, 90, physician, health care advocate. June 13
- Robin Waldemar Peterson, 87, retired school principal and farmer. June 16
- Bobbye Corene Sisk Temple, 82, journalist, historian, professor. June 16
- Pete V. McCracken, 72, agricultural consultant, dance studio owner, chef, Porterville City Council member. June 20
- Sidney J.W. Sharp Jr., 79, attorney, real estate project developer. June 28
- Ernest "David" Castaneda, 68, prominent figure in Mendota sports scene. June 27

#### July

- John Hoover, 51, former Fresno High and Fresno State pitching star. July 8
- Jean Baptiste Lamoure Jr., 91, Valley dry-cleaning business owner. July 9
- Virginia Lee Rose, 79, community volunteer and retired probation aide. July 12
- Eli Setencich, 90, longtime Bee columnist. July 12
- Ron Shapazian, 69, owner of Shapazian Realty and MLS chair. July 21

- Army Pfc. Keith Williams, 19, Visalia soldier killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan. July 24
- Haig Kasparian, 80, founder and owner of Kasparian's Paint Center. July 29
- Donald William Pitts, 86, retired federal magistrate judge for Yosemite National Park. July 31

#### August

- Thomas Anton Vidmar, 70, owner of Anlin Window Systems. Aug. 1
- Edward Paul Baloian, 92, co-founder and chairman of Baloian Farms. Aug 2
- Shirley Rodder Blum, 84, bridge player. Aug. 4
- Andre Bush, 45, acclaimed Fresno musician, instructor and composer. Aug. 8
- Donald P. Dick, 81, retired air-conditioning contractor; founder of Donald P. Dick Air Conditioning. Aug. 10
- Matthew Harkenrider, 26, Community Regional Medical Center radiology technologist killed when his car was hit by another driven by a woman under the influence of methamphetamine. Aug. 14
- Jack Hall, 57, political activist; director, government affairs, Comcast Cable. Aug. 20
- Steven Nagel, 67, former NASA astronaut, retired Air Force colonel and Fresno State graduate. Aug. 21
- Paul A. Vortmann, 70, retired Tulare County Superior Court judge. Aug. 31

#### September

- Richard Kiel, 72, Clovis resident and actor made famous in James Bond movies. Sept. 10
- Arthur Wiebe, 94, former president of Fresno Pacific University. Sept. 14
- Richard Harris, 89, owner of Sanger Hospital. Sept. 21
- Earl Calvin Smith, 86, former Fresno State and pro baseball player, grocery store owner, almond farmer. Sept. 27
- Leo P. Michaelides, 96, retired investor and developer. Sept. 27
- William Robert "Bob" Belcher, 83, city of Fresno parks manager. Sept. 30

#### October

- Earl R. Meyers, 95, physician and surgeon, "father of black medicine" in Fresno. Oct. 1
- Charlie Waters, 66, former Bee executive editor. Oct. 8
- B.J. McCoon, 82, longtime Fresno artist. Oct. 9
- George Akina, 63, regular Good Company Players lead actor. Oct. 10
- Elizabeth "Beth" Nunes, 51, Dinuba city manager. Oct. 12
- Burton Swope, 68, former Visalia Times-Delta editor. Oct. 18
- Earl Smittcamp, 96, farmer and founder of Wawona Frozen Foods. Oct. 20

## November

- Arthur J. Hill, 99, retired owner of Hill Oil Co. and retired executive director of the Fresno Legion of Valor Museum. Nov. 4
- Don Paul, 89, 1971 Fresno Athletic Hall of Fame inductee and a member of the 1951 Los Angeles Rams NFL championship team. Nov. 8
- John Krebs, 87, former Fresno congressman. Nov. 10
- Edward Palacios, 49, vice president of operations for nine Vibra Healthcare facilities and board chairman of Valley Public Radio. Nov. 15
- Vince Costi, 45, Dinuba High science teacher. Nov. 28

## December

- Jack B. Moody, 91, retired vice president of advertising and sales promotion at Gottschalks. Dec. 7
- George Sheklian, 85, owner of Georgio's and Son shoe repair in north Fresno, died of injuries suffered during armed robbery at next-door gun shop. Dec. 9

— Compiled by Bee librarian Ashley Wayte

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