

PRESENTATION OF THE 2007 LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD TO HAROLD ROY VANDEL AND DONALD R. EVERETT

June 10 and July 1, 2007

The Derrel Dee Webb Lifetime Service Award was established in the Spring of 2005 by the Board of Directors of the Sionito Campgrounds Association as a means of recognizing and honoring individuals who have consistently through their lives made significant contributions to the overall enhancement of the Sionito Campgrounds and the programs and camps which have operated there. In fact, the sole criteria for selection of a recipient of the Lifetime Service Award is that "the individual must have contributed a lifetime of outstanding service to Camp Sionito".

After a rigorous selection process conducted by a specially appointed committee of the Board of Directors of the Sionito Campgrounds Association from a field of highly qualified nominees, the Sionito Board determined it was again appropriate to recognize two individuals for their unselfish dedication to the campgrounds.

Harold Roy Vandel:

Roy Vandel was born November 4, 1913 in Lineville, Iowa. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Alliance, Nebraska where Roy spent most of his formative years. He later moved to Houston, Texas and it was there that Roy met his future wife, Reta Mae Morse, at the Heights Congregation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Roy and Reta Mae were married July 29, 1941. Reta Mae taught school at the elementary level and was very musical. She sang and played the piano and organ. Together Roy and Reta raised three children: Allen who resides in Springfield, Missouri with his wife Shirley; Marilyn who resides in Poquoson, Virginia with her husband Bryan Schempf; and Jerry who lives in Austin, Texas with his wife Diana. There are a total of nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Answering the call of Uncle Sam, Roy served in the Army Medical Corp during WWII. His term of service included a stint aboard a hospital ship in the Pacific theater of operations. On receipt of his discharge from service, Roy returned to Houston where he began his career in construction as a tile contractor.

Roy and his brother Ben subsequently formed a general contracting partnership. Over the years, they constructed homes, sub-divisions and shopping centers. Later, Roy and Ben acquired and operated a hardware store together.

Upon retirement, Roy and Reta Mae moved to Marshfield, Missouri where they lived together until Roy's death in 1999. Reta Mae passed away April 23, 2007.

As a High Priest, Roy served his church in numerous capacities including pastor and district president. He had a hand in the construction of the buildings occupied by the Pasadena and Post Oak Congregations as well as the acquisition of the Bay Area Congregation building.

He was a powerful leader able to engage many individuals in local and world church ministries and programs. He was later ordained to serve as an Evangelist.

Not a man of many words and certainly not one to draw attention to himself, Roy let his actions do his talking. Due to his dedication, leadership skills and knowledge and experience in construction, for a number of years Roy helped manage the Sionito Campgrounds, headed up work parties and was key in planning projects including work on the dining hall and tabernacle. He not only contributed of his time and labor, but also donated building materials from his construction business and hardware store. Because his vision for Camp Sionito was contagious, he was able to recruit others to help out at work parties and attend Sionito camps and reunions.

The Vandel Cabin was located on the curve of the road going down toward the river and was occupied by the Vandel family at each reunion. Roy directed his share of reunions and Reta Mae was active in teaching children's classes, playing piano and organ as well as signing in the choir for worship services.

Always on the lookout for opportunities to increase campground revenues, Roy was among those who agreed to lease the campground to pasture cattle. This worked out just fine until one work party when the heffers got a little feisty and ran through the camp damaging several tents. Perhaps that's the reason grazing at Camp Sionito is now limited to the local deer population.

No doubt, Roy was one of the individuals that helped put Camp Sionito on the map. Development of the campgrounds would not have occurred had it not been for the dedication and sacrifice of Roy Vandel. Moreover, the lives of many could not have been so richly blessed by the Divine without his years of consistent dedicated service. For these reasons, today we pay tribute to Roy Vandel and honor him for his lifetime of service to Camp Sionito.

Donald R. Everett:

Don Everett was born January 10, 1929 in Dallas, Texas to Ed and Chatti Everett. He was raised in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and cannot remember a time when he and his family did not attend reunion. His father was in the restaurant business and could not always attend but made sure Chatty and the kids did. Don recalls good memories attending reunions in Hearne and Dripping Springs, Texas. One of his most special memories was when he rode a train to attend the reunion at Camp Ben McCullough.

Don attended Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa from 1946 to 1949. From there he joined the United States Army and was stationed at Fort Chaffee in Fort Smith, Arkansas where he met Anne Schluterman. They were married in 1951 and after the Korean War moved to Dallas. While in Dallas, Don worked for Williamson Dunlap building houses. This job took them to Dickinson, Texas where he and Anne decided to stay to raise their growing and growing family!

Don and Anne have five children. Debbie is the oldest and resides in Winnie, Texas

with her husband Dwight Hines. They have 3 sons and a grandson. Shannon is their first son and lives with his wife Rosemary in Aurora, Illinois. They also have 3 children. Kelly is next in line. He and his wife Tammy live in Lamoni, Iowa. They too have 3 children and 2 granddaughters. Tim is the youngest son and lives with his wife Vicki in Huffman, Texas. They have 2 daughters. Last but not least is Katie who resides in Manvel, Texas with her husband Charles Persall; they have 3 children as well. If you have lost count there are five Everett kids and their spouses, fourteen grandchildren and their spouses plus three great-grandchildren which makes for a very fun time and a lot of Dr. Pepper!

Don's involvement with Camp Sionito began as he made sure vacation times were scheduled for the week of reunion. There are many joyful family memories of traveling to Bandera and their week together in a tent!

Don loved attending and bringing his family to reunion and for this reason he has put a lifetime of service into the development and maintenance the grounds here at Camp Sionito. Don recalls many of the projects he has been a part of -- seats for the tabernacle (three different times), the purchase of kitchen equipment, putting in the water system as well as removing the roof from the tabernacle and using it to re-roof the children's area. He has planted trees, put in a septic tank and upgraded the volleyball courts but his services did not stop with these. Don retired from Exxon in 1991 and along with his good friend Derrel Webb, who also retired, began their service as Camp Sionito board members. Don held several offices from president to treasurer. Don made the comment that you had to operate Sionito with no money just donations! As a result of this the Old, Old Path was created to raise money. Don helped with the construction of the swimming pool and many other priceless contributions to the campgrounds.

There is no doubt that Don Everett has spent a lifetime in the development of Camp Sionito and today we honor his years of service to the development of these holy grounds! Almost all of Don's family is here today, attending reunion. In fact 29 out 32 members of Don's family are here today. We honor and thank you Don for helping to develop a great place to bring your family and have lifelong friendships.