

BOB FOSTER BIO FOR DINNER PROGRAM

1983 was the year that Bob Foster transitioned from the School Board to the City Council. It was also the year that Bob, his wife Nancy and their sons Del, Chris, Blayney and Corey spent seven weeks crisscrossing the US, cementing their tight-knit family relationship. Each kid picked two states based on AAA brochures, then Bob built the itinerary and they set out in their Econoline Van. They camped out half the time, and shared driving duties among four licensed drivers. Five days in Washington DC were especially memorable and meaningful.

Solidifying their close family relationship on that trip augmented their daily routine of always eating both breakfast and dinner together, discussing world, national and local issues and politics. Conversations were never shared outside since sensitive information was openly discussed.

Bob and Nancy now have 15 grandchildren and are keeping up the family traveling tradition by taking grandkids on trips – Disneyland or similar destinations when they are 9-10, more mature destinations as they become teens. They've recently returned from Costa Rica with Corey's 13-year old twin boys.

Family patriarch Bob is also an accomplished attorney and politician. An only child born in Long Beach, Bob moved frequently as his dad served in the Navy. He ended up attending Willow Glen High School where he met Nancy, who he married several years later after both graduated from San Jose State and Bob studied law at Boalt in Berkeley.

Spending his first year as a lawyer in Sacramento, Bob rewrote real estate codes for the Legislative Council's Office. The Fosters moved to Morgan Hill in 1965, liking the small-town atmosphere and lively downtown core. He joined Ernie Rusconi's law office and used his code-writing expertise to rewrite the City's codes for readability. Over the years, Bob had several contracts with the city, including stints as the City Attorney.

Soon after his arrival in Morgan Hill, Bob got involved in the local political scene. He fondly recalls the regular coffee klatch meetings with local leaders, especially Tuesdays when School Board and City Council upcoming agenda items could be discussed. Bob recalls back in the 60's when Police Chief Moreno had to explain why not enough traffic tickets were being written to help pay city debts!

Bob's political bent led him to running for the School Board in 1969, towing 3-year old Del in a wagon and pointing to Del when asked why he was running – "I want to send him to college". He served three terms, then after the family sojourn across country, was elected to the 1984-88 Council, serving as Mayor in his very first year! Bob is proud that he was able to bring growth and no/slow growth factions together to bring a friendly resolution to the "Save El Toro" situation.

When Council Member Jan Smith passed away while on the Council in 1996, Bob was appointed, then elected to fill the seat. As a friend of somewhat controversial Council member Bev Freeman, Bob was able to smooth over Council discord and create a more productive atmosphere. Even while not serving in elected/appointed political offices, Bob has always been a source of wise counsel as a leader in the community, a true statesman. He was always active – Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, scouting, coaching, “Citizen of the Year” in 1969, Rotary, and more – always in leadership roles. The firm also did pro-bono work to establish non-profit fundraising entities for many youth sports organizations and, notably, our Historical Society.

Bob’s law practice evolved and he gained certification as a specialist in Estate Planning, Probate and Trust law. In the late 80’s Bob spent a considerable amount of time working with the Bar Association drafting and reviewing proposed Probate/Trust legislation. He retired after 50 years of active legal practice at the end of 2015, leaving management of the Rusconi, Foster and Thomas firm in the very capable hands of son Del, also a certified Estate Planner specialist.

Family cohesiveness requires a strong woman to keep it viable and vibrant – Nancy fits that role extremely well. A school teacher when Bob was in law school, Nancy developed leadership skills that have served her well in parenting and in her community involvement. She has held many leadership roles in school and youth-sports-related activities. She was a founder of the local AAUW chapter.

All Foster boys graduated from Live Oak High School. The two younger brothers have moved from Morgan Hill – Blayney to Menlo Park where he is heavily invested in arts programs and involved in his church, Corey to Rohnert Park where he is head engineer for a technical products distribution company.

Chris and his kids live here in Morgan Hill where Chris works with brother Del and provides HR, marketing and technical support services for the law firm. In addition to supporting his kids educational and athletic endeavors, he is a member of Rotary where he is assuming more leadership roles. Brother Del also still lives in Morgan Hill. Del has served two School Board terms (overlapping with his father’s Council term for a while) and is on several non-profit Boards, including chairing the Board of the philanthropic arm of the Rotary Club of Morgan Hill. In both Del and Chris, we see the legacy of the leadership of Bob and Nancy, the continuation of leadership excellence that will be passed forward to the 15 grandkids and their future progeny.

Thanks for your excellent leadership, Bob Foster and family!

