



Dennis H. Ensign

June 8, 1937 - October 27, 2011

ENSIGN, Dennis H.

June 8, 1937 - October 27, 2011 A native Santa Barbaran, Dennis was raised along with his sister, Donna Lee, by his parents G. Herbert Ensign, Montecito Fire Chief, and Ruby Anderson Ensign. Dennis attended Montecito Union, Santa Barbara Jr. High and graduated from Santa Barbara High School in 1955. During the summer of 1954, Dennis became a member of the Los Prietos Hot Shots (U.S. Forest Service), fighting fires throughout the State of California. He again worked on the Hot Shot crew the summer of 1955 and fought the devastating Refugio Fire on the Santa Barbara front country. Dennis then attended Santa Barbara Jr. College but decided firefighting was in his blood and left just prior to his finals to rejoin the Forest Service in a career that lasted 32 years. Dennis eventually met Judy Lillard who, in September 1959 became his bride and together they raised three children: Michael, Marty, and Karen. Dennis was promoted in the Forest Service to engine foreman at the summit of San Marcos Pass, then transferred to the Los Prietos engine. He was then promoted to Assistant Fire Control Officer for the Santa Barbara Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. After seven years, Dennis and his family were transferred to the Mi-Wuk District of the Stanislaus National Forest as Fire Control Officer. Four years later, Dennis was transferred back to the Los Padres and the Supervisor's office as Assistant Fire Management Officer/Public Information Officer for the entire

forest. Dennis retired from the Forest Service in 1988. He then managed Ocean Meadows Golf Course for 2 years; then was an Administrative Assistant in the Security Department of Applied Magnetics Corp. As a youngster, Dennis became a member of the Montecito Home Club where he was introduced to scale model railroading, a hobby that lasted a lifetime. He also began to play golf while in high school and continued playing past his retirement years. Golf was something his entire family enjoyed. His family also joined him in watching baseball (Giants), football (Lions), and basketball (Celtics). He and his mother-in-law had a dime bet on the Giant/Dodger games (Fran was a Dodger fan). Dennis loved to play cards and enjoyed playing bridge with neighbors, or cribbage with the Elks Caravaneers. He was active in his sons' Boy Scout activities, and attended all the kids sporting events and extra-curricular activities. Dennis was also a member of Santa Barbara Elks Lodge #613. Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Judy, son Mike (Yvette), son Marty (Monica), daughter Karen (Steve); grandchildren Spencer, Eddie Mesa, Cierra, Luke, Jared and MacKenzie; and his cocker spaniel, Cubby. He is also survived by his brothers-in-law, Bob Lillard of Lompoc, Tim Lillard (Maria) of Lompoc, as well as several nieces and nephews, and grand nephews. He leaves behind many friends from the various fire organizations throughout the State, as well as friends from the Elks Club. He was predeceased by his parents, Herb and Ruby Ensign, his sister, Donna Lee Ensign, his in-laws, Gene and Fran Lillard. Dennis loved his family above everything. He often said that spending time with family was the most important part of life. He was dearly loved and will be forever missed. The family would like to thank the staff of Mission Terrace for their tender caring of Dennis. A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, November 12, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. at Paradise Campground off Hwy. 154/Paradise Road.