

Melvin Douglas Atwell

5/30/1922 – 4/19/2014



A talented watercolor artist, Mel was a member of Mid Valley Arts League. He sold numerous paintings and has given more away. Later in life he gifted numerous prints of his "Hobby Horse and Friends" to many acquaintances and friends when he learned of their pregnancies. His art can be found all over the United States and as far away as Thailand and Norway. He loved having the name and address of all who owned his art and kept in contact by sending notecards he created

Mel was also a member of the Pacific Coast League Historical Society, setting up a booth each year highlighting photos and memorabilia from his brother Richard (Dick) Atwell's semi-pro baseball days. He kept newspaper clippings of teammates Richard Atwell with Joe DiMaggio on the San Francisco Seals. Mel laughed when describing how efficient the USPS was by showing a letter postmarked in 1930's Pasadena addressed to "Dick Atwell House of David Baseball Team Anywhere USA" and it found his brother in Chicago. Mel has been credited with providing authors Kevin Nelson and PJ Dragseth with valuable information including photos and correspondence from the early days of baseball for numerous books.

His second career during off hours from the Pasadena Fire Department was that of a Southern California sign painter. He enjoyed lifelong accounts including that of Clearman's Northwood's Inn and all their off shoots. At the age of 90 he hand lettered the menu for Clearman's Galley "The Boat" restaurant in San Gabriel at Clearman's Village. They refused to accept his retirement two years prior.

Mel loved growing up in Pasadena, being born the same year as the Rosebowl. In his first year, home was the tent city next to the rubble of Rosebowl construction, now the location of Brookside Park and Jackie Robinson Field. As kids, they anticipated the Chicago White Sox annual spring training which began there in 1933. Mel's smile was infectious when fondly recalling his own youth baseball days seeing his mom sitting in the stands at Brookside park with Mallie Robinson watching their boys play together. Neither would know for sure that one day the same field would be named after one of their sons.

December 7, 1941 changed Mel's plans of a baseball career and he enlisted in the Navy on January 7, 1942 leaving school at PJC early. He would later meet and marry his wife Millie and they would enjoy another 69 years together. Mel knew no stranger, having a genuine interest in people. He could strike up a conversation with anyone, anywhere and within minutes know where they were raised, went to school and where they worked. He had a great sense of humor and loved to tell stories, cracking himself up in the process.

Mel loved sharing his art with countless friends, old and new. Welcome to that group.

Hobby Horse & friends

Mel Atwell

