

“You Made Our Lives So Much Richer”

By County Supervisor Dave Roberts

Last week, Del Mar resident Lou Terrell was killed in an awful accident by an Amtrak train while he was trying to save his canine companion Abe from an oncoming train along the coastal bluffs. This was terrible news for everyone, including me.

Lou was a great leader and a true friend. I am one of many friends who join family members in sympathy over his untimely passing.

Even though I am sad that Lou will no longer physically be present in our lives, I was so pleased that a standing room of family and friends overflowed the Del Mar Powerhouse this past Sunday less than 45 hours after his death to celebrate his life and his many accomplishments.

I first met Lou over eight years ago after I began serving on the Solana Beach City Council and had already been active in local and regional affairs. Lou's contributions to his beloved Del Mar where he served as councilmember and Mayor are well known. But he was also very active as the former President of Planned Parenthood San Diego/Riverside County, as a former Board Member of ACLU San Diego/Imperial Counties, as a co-founder of the Del Mar Foundation with Joel Holliday and he was on the Board of the Foundation for Change. He was also active at San Diego State University, where he was a political science professor and helped to groom future leaders on and off campus.

Our shared passion for equality for all people was quickly apparent and over time led to a growing friendship.

It was through Foundation for Change, a non-profit dedicated to social justice, where we cemented our friendship. Lou had heard that my family and I lived in the former home of the singer Miss Patti Page in Solana Beach and he asked if he could hold a Meet & Greet social there. When he was at our home one day preparing for this event, he asked me how I had so many children. We talked about the county's foster to adoption program and how we were blessed with a number of adopted children. It was then that we learned that Lou's wife, Juvenile Judge Carol Isackson, had been involved in my family's creation during the adoption process of some of our foster children. Clearly it's a small world, but this was a touching coincidence.

As our friendship grew, I saw how seamlessly Lou helped others reach their potential. We both loved politics and how to make the system work to improve the lives of the citizens in the region. In my case, Lou supported my attempts to expand my ability to serve others in San Diego County with time, energy and resources.

Lou helped me to understand the dynamics of the Del Mar community and he helped to connect me with former mayors when I was running for County Supervisor. And Lou was always ready to lend a hand to help and encourage others to help, too. In fact, Lou came to my birthday party at my house last month to help begin my re-election campaign.

Lou was a survivor physically and mentally. He had battled and overcome brain cancer. With good humor we discussed both the joys and challenges of our aging bodies. Even with this ailment, Lou always repeated a number of his favorite expressions including, "That's just wonderful" and "you made my life so much richer."

Lou loved to walk his dog Abe as much as I enjoy walking my dog, Cutie, which I do with my kids. Lou always counseled me to enjoy each day and to recognize that we only get so many days in our lives, so we had better make the most of it. For me, that is one of the toughest ironies .

To the Terrell-Isackson family and all who knew Lou truly made our lives so much richer. Lou was just a wonderful man, and it is wonderful that our paths crossed so many years ago. Rest in peace, my dear friend.