



# Earl W. Frey

APR 4, 1926 - NOV 21, 2015



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## **Earl W. Frey**

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### **E**arle W. “Bill” Frey April 4, 1926 – November 21, 2015

Well known in the avocado and banking industries of Escondido, Bill Frey was a nurseryman, grower, entrepreneur, innovator, teacher, mentor, father, and husband of Elizabeth “Ibby” Frey.

Born in Anaheim, California, Bill grew up on a small citrus ranch in the Whittier area. Upon graduation from Whittier High School, he enlisted in the Navy and reported for training at the Naval Training Center in San Diego. He served as Fireman First Class aboard aircraft carrier USS Wasp (CV-7) in the South Pacific when the ship was struck by torpedoes from a Japanese submarine on September 15, 1942. The Wasp was severely damaged, ultimately abandoned and sunk.

Upon returning from the war, Bill enrolled in Cal Poly San Dimas (Pomona) where he earned a BA in Subtropical Fruit Production in 1949. He also fell in love with his roommate’s sister, Elizabeth Ferguson – “Ibby” to her friends and family. They were married in August of 1949 and soon after his graduation, moved to the rural town of Escondido to start his avocado nursery and raise a family.

With his GI savings, Bill and Ibby were able to buy a steep and rocky hillside almost unsuitable for anything resembling an agriculture venture. Undeterred, Bill had an idea how to grow avocado trees faster and healthier than the accepted industry standards. He developed a unique method of planting avocado seeds into special containers with a soil mixture of his own specifications. His success in the industry began the era of container-grown avocado trees that, along with Bill’s innovative ways of budding, grafting and water delivery, are still used in the industry today.

Bill’s efforts resulted in the production of more than 250,000 trees per year during the heyday of the avocado industry, making Frey Nursery, Inc. the largest avocado nursery in the United States.



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He also managed and had partnership interests in over 1,000 acres throughout North San Diego County.

A humble and private man, he taught his business and agricultural methods to others. Always active in his community, Bill served on the board of the Escondido Mutual Water Company for over 30 years, spent 8 years on the local school board and helped create the California Avocado Advisory Board. In 1998 he was awarded the Oliver Atkins Award for excellence and service from the California Avocado Society.

A tireless entrepreneur, Bill was involved in the founding of two regional banks, Escondido National Bank and First Pacific National Bank, as well as San Pasqual Vineyards, now called Orfila Vineyards.

Bill was an avid fisherman, heading to the Sierras and points north in the summer to fly fish for rainbow trout and venturing south to the ocean waters of Baja California for game fish and albacore. To escape the heat of Escondido summers, the Freys commuted between their avocado/citrus ranch and their Del Mar beach house they purchased in 1964. They sold their Escondido ranch home in 2005 and moved to Carlsbad where on November 21st Bill passed away peacefully in his sleep. He is preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Iby (2015).

He is survived by his three daughters and their husbands, Dean and Robin Ludwig, Don and Tricia Burdge, and Michael and Kathleen Loftus; grandchildren Elizabeth Ludwig, William Burdge, Lucy Cline and Molly Cline; and his sister Frances Frey Vin. A private family graveside service is planned at Oak Hill Memorial Park in Escondido, CA. In lieu of flowers, please send donations in the name of Earle W. Frey to Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater San Diego / Baker branch, PO Box 178569 San Diego, CA 92177.



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Earl by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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