

IN MEMORIAM A.C. "Ace" Smith



Former Pacific Gas and Electric district manager, A.C. "Ace" Smith of San Luis Obispo died on March 15, 1995 at a university hospital in Palo Alto after a lengthy illness. He was 77.

"Ace" was born July 18, 1917 on a farm in Osseo, Mich. He graduated from the Michigan College of Mining and Technology in 1940 with a degree in civil engineering, and that same year he married Marguerite Walther. His professional career began in Washington, D.C. as a cadet engineer, followed by a wartime shift to the western division of the U.S. Geological Survey as a topographic and photogrammetric engineer.

He joined PG&E in 1943 as a test engineer and transferred to Salinas in 1947 as a farm power adviser. He moved up through the engineering and management ranks at PG&E to become executive representative for the Coast Valley Division in 1966. In 1968, he was promoted to district manager in San Luis Obispo. His final assignment at PG&E was as governmental and public affairs coordinator for the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, a position he held from 1970 until his retirement in 1983.

In the 27 years he and his wife lived in San Luis Obispo, "Ace" was active in the Women's Shelter, California Society of Professional Engineers, Citizens for Adequate Energy, Rotary International, YMCA, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, San Luis Obispo County Development Association Inc., Soil Conservation Society of America, March of Dimes, and California Waterways Recreation Association. He also had a deep interest in photography and served as a photo judge at fairs in several counties.

Since 1947, "Ace" and his wife have taught folk dancing to as many as 1,500 people each week on the central coast. In 1948 he helped found the University of Pacific Folk Dance Camp, a two-week international folk and square dance workshop, currently in its 48th year of operation, which is conducted on the University of Pacific campus at Stockton. "Ace" was also chairman of the California Rodeo Association square dance committee, which sponsors the annual California Rodeo Square Dance Roundup held during the "Big Week" in Salinas.

In addition to his wife of 54 years, Marge, "Ace" is survived by his three children, Marilyn, Janice and A.C. "Chip" Smith Jr; 12 grandchildren, his 99-year-old mother, Marie Smith; and three sisters, Virginia Hazel, Carol Phillipson and Priscilla Crimmons.