



Harvey James Rosener

March 13, 1935 - May 28, 2016

Harvey James Rosener, age 81, passed away Saturday, May 28, surrounded by family, after a 10-year battle with prostate cancer.

Harvey was born March 13, 1935 in Dayton, Ohio to Alma and Willard C. Rosener. He discovered his wife-to-be, Mary, when working at the Cedar Point Amusement Park. His job was to repair and maintain a small steam train attraction at the park. Little did he know that two of the things he would end up cherishing for the rest of his life were standing right in front of him. He discovered Mary, and started a 50-plus year love affair for steam and his passion for figuring out how things worked enough to fix them, design them and make them better.

Following in the engineering footsteps of his father, Harvey became an electrical engineer and enjoyed a robust career designing and problem solving using technology and his calculus-wired brain. After working in Los Angeles designing controls for Hughes Aircraft, he and his family moved to Oregon, where he started work for Tektronix in 1972. From vacuum tubes to designing modern-day integrated chips for flight control systems, Harvey's long career was very much intertwined in Oregon's high-tech industry. Tasks such as home wiring and home automation were completely in his wheelhouse. His house always had the latest electronic gadgets. The smile on his face would always confirm that these devices were simply his toys.

After retirement, Harvey started working for the pure fun of it, helping a variety of causes and projects that needed just a bit of his engineering know how. He

worked with students at Newberg High School, teaching them how to wire and program a computer to run a robot named “Jack” that would rise up out of a box and turn on the power switch and music of a CD player. He loved the kids and traveled with them to Pennsylvania for a national competition. “Jack” won judge’s choice honors, and Harvey couldn’t have been more proud.

Not to be limited by electrical engineering background, he turned his attention to an older technology, and one that he was introduced to early in his adult life –steam. He was active in the Antique Power Land near Brooks, OR for more than 30 years and welcomed the opportunity to volunteer during the summer steam event ritual, helping visitors young and old learn about steam power. His cancer didn’t slow him down. He simply rented a golf cart to get around when his legs wouldn’t take him. In 1999, he met the lead engineer in charge of the Southern Pacific 4449 steam locomotive, which is housed in Portland, and would soon share his volunteer talents for the train engine that most people know as the Freedom Train – the train that completed a cross-country trip towing a rolling-railcar museum in celebration of 1976 bicentennial. He would complete many tasks on the 4449, helping solve many electrical issues. He rewired many train cars in his time with the 4449.

Trading from 50 horsepower to the 5,000 horsepower engine of the 4449 was quite a jump. He would later become a strong advocate of the steam engine, helping bring it to Sherwood for two summer festival visits over the years. He understood that not just anyone could be a railroad conductor. He, instead opted for a more appropriate title with an electronic flare, “semi-conductor,” a title carefully engraved on the front of the train conductor hat he would wear when teaching those curious about the mighty engine.

His advice to new 4449 volunteers was simple – “Be a good listener. Don’t be afraid of getting real dirty. Think before you act. When not sure, ask. Wear work clothes. Bring gloves. If you have a talent that is needed, become a leader. There is a right way to do things that may not be the way you think it should be done. Bear up. You, in time, will be rewarded.” These rules summed up many aspects of his life.

Beyond his keen interest in understanding how things ticked from a mechanical or electrical perspective, he also took a keen and genuine interest in getting to know those around him and understanding their stories. Everyone was game, whether a fellow volunteer, any of the many friends of his kids growing up or one of the many caregivers who helped take care of him in his final years. All were potential and willing victims of a corny joke or a story of one of his volunteer exploits. If in the course of conversation, he discovered that the person in front of him was in need of help, and he could provide it, he did so without hesitation. This was just how he was wired.

Harvey was a strong family man. He loved his sons and encouraged them to follow their dreams, and treasured his grandchildren. He died at home surrounded by his family. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mary, sons Tim and Daven and their wives, five grandchildren, many friends and numerous fellow volunteers. His family remains forever thankful to all those who enriched Harvey's life throughout the years, including the caregivers, nurses and doctors who cared for him toward the end.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Harvey's name to the non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration, maintenance, and operation of the SP 4449 steam locomotive. Send donations to Friends of SP 4449 Inc., P.O. Box 42486, Portland, OR 97242.

Harvey's family will host a celebration of his life June 24 at 6 p.m. at the Oregon Rail Heritage Center (www.orhf.org) in Portland, adjacent to OMSI. The center is the home of the SP 4449. All are welcome to attend. For more information, go to www.rosener.com. Directions to the celebration are available here (<http://bit.ly/25MSflk>).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN **24**. 6:00 PM (PT)

Oregon Rail Heritage Center
2250 SE Water Ave.
Portland, OR 97214
<http://www.orhf.org>

Tribute Wall



“ *Attrell's Funeral Chapel created a Tribute Video in memory of Harvey James Rosener*



Attrell's Newberg Funeral Chapel - June 06, 2016 at 10:36 AM



“ *Mr. Rosener was always so nice, friendly and joking when we'd gather at the Rosener house in highschool and once or twice our freshman year of college. I remember the suspenders he wore. :) My condolences to Mrs. Rosener, Tim, Daven and the rest of the family.*



Kim Heater - June 01, 2016 at 09:58 AM