



CALIFORNIA STATE
RAILROAD MUSEUM
FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

**A Lifelong Rail Enthusiast & Advocate,
California State Railroad Museum Foundation Board Member
Dr. Denny Anspach Passed Away September 20**

SACRAMENTO (September 21, 2020) – Dr. Denny Anspach MD, a highly esteemed member of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation Board of Directors, passed away on Sunday, September 20, 2020 at the age of 86 after a long battle with cancer. A passionate rail enthusiast, Dr. Anspach was instrumental in the vision for and creation of the California State Railroad Museum that opened in 1981.

Born in Chicago in 1934, Dr. Anspach was a graduate of Stanford University medical school, a retired radiologist in Sacramento (which included serving as Chief of Radiology at Sutter General Hospital), and Arden Park resident for 50+ years. While growing up in Chicago, Dr. Anspach had a fascination with railroads from a young age and was committed to preserving their legacy over the course of his entire lifetime. After relocating to Sacramento, Dr. Anspach hosted a historic dinner in 1970 for California Governor Ronald Reagan aboard the *Gold Coast*, an occasion designed to win the governor's support for what would one day become the California State Railroad Museum. Ronald Reagan would later turn the first shovelful of dirt to signify the start of the construction of the museum.

"There is no question that we would not have the California State Railroad Museum without Dr. Denny Anspach, he was truly the 'Founding Father,'" said Cheryl Marcell, President & CEO of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation. "He was my guide, my historian, and my counselor in all things as I stepped into the role of President & CEO of the Foundation. I cherished our long breakfast meetings at The Sutter Club, our travels throughout the country and enjoyed listening and learning. He would often say that we shouldn't get bogged down by policies and procedures and if it was the right thing to do, we should just do it! He will forever be remembered for his passion and his dedication and we are all better human beings by knowing Dr. Denny Anspach."

Dr. Anspach was also the founding president of the Sacramento Trust for Historic Preservation and was the primary author of the nearly 200-page "*California State Railroad Museum: Recommendations for Planning & Development*" that was published in 1972 and served as the master plan for the world-class museum. He served as the unofficial but effective custodian of many prized locomotive and was instrumental in the relocation of the Gov. Stanford, the Central Pacific railroad's first locomotive that remains on display in the Railroad Museum. He was honored to serve as master of ceremonies for the grand opening of the California State Railroad Museum (that coincided with Railfair '81) at the Old Sacramento Waterfront.

"Dr. Denny Anspach was a public servant not by vocation but by advocacy," said Ty Smith, Museum Director for the California State Railroad Museum. "Over the last three years, I had the great pleasure of traveling, laughing, and learning with him. I came to understand that, although he had many interests, three things animated his life: his family, his work as a medical doctor, and his stewardship of the California State Railroad Museum. I intend to honor his legacy by putting my maximum effort into ensuring that the Museum will continue to help people imagine their futures, by understanding our collective past. Dr. Anspach has passed, but his good work is forever enshrined in the Museum and the community."

In 2014, the national Railway & Locomotive Historical Society presented Dr. Anspach with the prestigious Gerald M. Best Senior Achievement Award, named for the famed railroad historian. Up until his death, Dr. Anspach remained active on the Board of Directors of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation, an organization he helped to create, and served on its executive committee. He is survived by his wife Rev. Diane Wenthe, daughter Carolyn Smith and son-in-Law Kenneth Smith, son David Anspach, granddaughter Anna Smith, grandson David Smith, and brother Dr. William Anspach. At the request of the family and in lieu of flowers, any remembrance donations should be made to the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

The California State Railroad Museum Foundation recently commissioned the creation of a bronze bust in honor of Dr. Anspach that will be put on display at the museum in the near future.

About the California State Railroad Museum Foundation

The mission of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation (CSRMF) is to generate revenue and awareness on behalf of its destinations, while supporting the preservation, interpretation, and promotion of our railroad heritage. The Foundation provides funding for ongoing support of numerous programs, both at the museum's Old Sacramento location and at the historic park in Jamestown, Calif. For more information, please visit www.californiarailroad.museum.

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