



# Walter Vielbaum

NOV 12, 1929 - JUN 14, 2023



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## Walter Vielbaum

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**W**alter (Walt) Vielbaum passed away at home on June 14, 2023. He was 93. Husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Walt enjoyed people and had tremendous enthusiasm for his work as well as his love of photography and local history as it related to all things railroad and transit. Walt co-authored 3 books (Arcadia Publishing) where his photographs and deep knowledge of local history brought the past to life. “San Francisco’s Interurban to San Mateo”, “San Francisco’s Municipal Railway MUNI” and “San Francisco’s Market Street Railway” were passionate endeavors.

Walt was born and raised in Burlingame, California. He attended Burlingame High School then the College of San Mateo. Walt entered military service (Army-Infantry) and served from 1951-1953 and attained the rank of corporal. He served in Korea during the Korean conflict.

Walter then worked alongside his father, Herbert C. Vielbaum, who founded Pacific Auto Repair in 1923 in Burlingame. A testament to Walter’s work ethos, the business is in its 100th year of operation - currently operated by Walt’s son Gary. Walt became principal owner in 1965 when Herb retired. A three generation business is a legacy he was proud to be a part of.

Walt married Norma Freeman in November 1955 and they had three children. The family lived in Belmont, California for about 16 years then relocated to Burlingame in the early ‘70’s.

Being a lifelong Peninsula resident and business owner, Walt enjoyed his participation in local affairs. He was a member of the San Mateo Elks Club for many years. Walt was also a member of the Burlingame Historical Society where he also donated from his collection items from the Muni railroad “40” line and various other historically significant items.

His deep interest and passion for preserving the historical narrative, photography



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and artifacts around transit and light rail in San Francisco and the Peninsula also led to his participation in the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association founded in 1946 – first as an original board member then charter member until the mid-2000’s. He served as the president of the Northern California Railroad Club. Walter also served as a member of the Market Street Railway Museum in San Francisco. After retirement, his passion led him to become certified as a Motorman where he worked and operated trains at the Western Railway Museum near Rio Vista. Walt always loved being the Motorman for the “Pumpkin Patch” train rides and watching all the little kids on their first train rides! Walt was one of the original early key members of this organization, spending decades and countless hour of service in his many roles at the museum. He particularly loved his role as docent and volunteer at the Museum, contributing always to the furtherance of preservation of railroad history. Walt is survived by his wife Norma of Burlingame, children Sharon V. Marks (Stephen Marks)-Seattle, Gary Vielbaum (Debbie Vielbaum) -San Mateo and Lori Lust (Paul Lust)- Yuba City. Grandchildren Christopher Marks, Kevin and Elaina Vielbaum and Christine and Michelle Lust. There are four great-grandchildren. The family asks that in lieu of flowers donations be sent in his name to:  
The Western Railway Museum, 5848 CA-12, Suisun City, CA 94585



# Memories only last if you share them

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



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