

Tracy loses leader in education

by TP staff

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Tom Hawkins (center) is congratulated by Tracy Unified school board president Bill Swenson (left) and Superintendent Jim Franco during a ceremony marking Hawkins' retirement from the school board in August 2010. Hawkins died Tuesday, Oct. 18. Press file photo

Thomas W. "Tom" Hawkins, 84, a major contributor to education and community life in Tracy for more than five decades, died this morning at home.

Since coming to Tracy in 1957, he was a school superintendent, school trustee, Breakfast Lions active member, bean festival chairman, basketball coach and tournament director and community volunteer.

Services will be next Thursday afternoon, Oct. 27, at St. Bernard's Catholic Church, followed by burial in Tracy Cemetery.

Mr. Hawkins was born April 29, 1927, in Antioch. He grew up in Antioch and Manteca. He left Manteca High School in 1944 to join the U.S. Navy during World War II, serving in the Pacific.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of San Francisco in 1950 and became an elementary school teacher at Waverly School, east of Stockton.

In 1957, Mr. Hawkins was named superintendent, principal and eighth-grade teacher at Jefferson School. He served as district superintendent for 31 years before retiring in 1989. In 2000, Tom Hawkins School in the Jefferson district was named for him.

After retiring, he was interim superintendent for the Banta, Delta Island and Jefferson districts.

For six years, he was chairman and coordinator of the California Dry Bean Festival in Tracy.

Mr. Hawkins joined the Tracy Lions Club in 1957 and transferred to the Tracy Breakfast Lions Club in 1961. As an active Breakfast Lions member, he served as club treasurer for more than 40 years and also as president. He headed the committee that operated the snack stands for Tracy high football games, raising money for all football programs.

In 1990, Mr. Hawkins was elected a trustee of the Tracy Joint Union High School District, and he continued as a trustee of the Tracy Unified School District, serving a total of 20 years before retiring in 2010.

Mr. Hawkins was a member of the board of directors of Tracy Community Memorial Hospital 16 years, girls basketball coach at Tracy High, longtime chairman of the Lions boys and girls basketball tournaments and a high school football official for 25 years.

As a parishioner of St. Bernard's Catholic Church, he was on the parish council for two terms and was a lector.

Mr. Hawkins also served as chairman of the Tracy Tomorrow Committee and as a 4-H Club leader.

He was a regular at coffee hours at the Four Corners restaurant in Carbona and a member of the Tracy Elks Lodge.

Survivors include his wife of 57 years, Joyce Hawkins of Tracy; four daughters, Dyan Hayes of Modesto and Susan Hawkins, Catherine Hawkins and Anne Langley, all of Tracy; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and a sister, Rosemary Lanza of Galt.

The Oct. 27 services will begin at 2 p.m. at St. Bernard's Catholic Church, 163 W. Eaton Ave., where a Mass of Christian burial will be said. Burial will be in Tracy Cemetery.

Visitation at Fry Memorial Chapel, 550 S. Central Ave., will be observed from 2 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26, followed at 7 p.m. with a rosary service at the mortuary.

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