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LOCAL 3 LEGEND LEAVES LEGACY

Former Operating Engineers Local 3 Business Manager Thomas “T.J.” Stapleton passed away Feb. 23. He was 85 years old. Considered one of the greatest labor leaders of the largest construction trades local in the United States, he served nearly five terms as business manager of Local 3 from 1982-1996 and as vice president of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE).

According to current Local 3 Business Manager Russ Burns: “During times when the industry dealt with two major recessions and a federal assault on prevailing wages, Tom Stapleton singlehandedly turned the union’s political and economic position around.

“He worked tirelessly on behalf of Local 3 members and their families. He was a true labor leader. We are all greater because of him,” said Burns. “This union will miss him terribly.”

Most recently, Stapleton served on the California High Speed Rail Authority Board as labor’s representative until he retired in 2009.

Stapleton’s life-long dedication to the middle class led to his prestigious Spirit of Life Award by the City of Hope in 1993, honoring him for his years of commitment to the labor movement.

Upon his retirement from the union he served since 1946, his dedication to labor and the middle class did not end. He was the tournament namesake of a highly touted golf tournament that has, for 15 years, contributed millions as the primary fundraiser for college scholarships throughout the union’s jurisdiction.

Operating Engineers Local 3 represents the interests of people who build, serve and protect. Most of Local 3's 42,000 members work as heavy-equipment operators and construction workers, but the union also represents public employees, such as maintenance workers and police officers. The training program for construction professionals gives employers access to the highest quality of workers, providing their business with a competitive edge while raising the quality of life for Local 3 members. Local 3's jurisdiction covers Northern California, Northern Nevada, Hawaii and Utah, and its membership makes up the largest construction trades local in the United States.

For more information on Tom Stapleton's life and career or to learn more about Local 3, visit www.oe3.org.