

San Josean Stan Harris remembered for his creativity, community involvement

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Photo by Larry Garrett Stan Harris, owner of etc...group inc. in Willow Glen and active in that...

Stan Harris was a familiar figure in downtown Willow Glen, with his bushy moustache, glasses, Hawaiian shirts, ready smile and friendly demeanor.

He was a man who greeted each day with optimism and enthusiasm.

"It didn't matter how bad the day before had been; it was a new day to Stan--full of opportunity. There was always something new to do and learn," says Diane Harris, his wife of 36 years.

Mr. Harris' life ended on May 4 while he was riding his beloved BMW motorcycle with a group of seven friends on Highway 33, just outside of Ojai in Ventura County.

Motorcycles were a "huge passion," says his wife.

"He started riding motorcycles before he had a driver's license, and the first thing he bought out of college was a motorcycle of his own. He was never without at least one in the garage."

Harris says her husband was an expert rider, always wearing full riding leathers and a helmet.

Fellow riders told her he was pulling over to a shoulder to stop when it apparently collapsed, throwing him off and down a hillside.

Born Virland Stanley Harris to Betty and Virland Stanley Harris on Christmas Day 1950 in Marshall, Mo., Mr. Harris grew up in Kansas City, Mo.

He met his future wife while both were students at Central Missouri State College, and both earned their master's degrees at the University of Missouri, hers in social work and his in education. The two married in 1976.

Mr. Harris, an Almaden Valley

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resident, taught high school English briefly but soon moved into the world of advertising and marketing.

A very creative man, he was skilled in photography, writing, production, directing, media and event production and marketing.

Amdahl recruited Mr. Harris in 1988, bringing him to Silicon Valley. He served as senior director of worldwide advertising and creative services for Amdahl when it was the second largest mainframe provider in the world.

In 1993 he left Amdahl to launch his own firm ETC Creative Services, headquartering it on Lincoln Avenue in Willow Glen.

Amdahl remained a client, and his client list was literally A to Z, from Adobe to Zhone Technologies. His work with Google took him around the world.

Mr. Harris was also a filmmaker. He was the producer and writer for *Fat Rose and Squeaky*, starring Cicely Tyson and Louise Fletcher, in 2006.

He sometimes collaborated on films with Larry Garrett. The two met 32 years ago through business in Kansas City, where Garrett still lives.

"He was my best friend," says Garrett. "Stan was probably the nicest guy I ever knew.

"We were totally brothers. He had incredibly high integrity; he was also optimistic. He was the most reliable and nicest person you'd ever come across."

Garrett and Mr. Harris collaborated on several films for children, including *Harley's Hill*, *Seeker & Fetch* and *The Stray*.

They were in the midst of shooting *Trooper: The Legend of the Golden Key* in Willow Glen at Hicklebee's, the Buffington House and other locations when Mr. Harris died.

Garrett stayed on to complete shooting.

"It was pretty devastating to the film crew because Stan touched people," Garrett says.

"The film business can have some unreliable people, but Stan was the kind of person who never let anything be left undone. He took care of things and did the right thing with people."

Kevin Swanson, owner of Integrated Wealth Management, came to know Mr. Harris through their work in the Willow Glen Business Association. They collaborated on Willow Glen in Motion, a local television show that focused on the Willow Glen Community.

"I took the concept to Stan, and he and I basically built Willow Glen in Motion," Swanson says.

"Stan always worked behind the scenes; he was never the person in front. He worked tirelessly to support Willow Glen in any way he could."

Swanson is pleased that he did coax Mr. Harris to be interviewed for their show one time. That episode and others can be viewed at www.wgnmotion.com.

"Stan would say, 'I stand behind the camera. I don't stand in front of it,' " Swanson says.

"He did everything behind the camera, and that provided such a beautiful perspective for everyone else."

The Harris family moved to Almaden Valley 14 years ago when their son Jacob was born.

There Mr. Harris was active with the Almaden Kiwanis, Almaden Cares, Boy Scout Troop 200 and South Hills Community Church.

In addition to his wife Diane and their son Jacob, Mr. Harris leaves behind his brother Scott, sister-in-law Danelle and nephew Vincent Harris of Arnold, Mo.

A memorial service for Stan Harris will be held on May 24 at 5 p.m. at South Hills Community Church. In lieu of flowers, his family appreciates donations in his memory to South Hills Community Church's Via Monte/Kids Club Ministry, Troop 200 Boy Scouts of America, Leland High School Music Department, Almaden Kiwanis, Almaden Cares or a charity of their choice.

- [Steven Dixon](#) · [University of Central Missouri](#)

I knew Stan mostly from the 1970's and it sounds like he stayed the same person I knew then. Always around for some fun but always around to help too.

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Stan was an amazing person - a consummate professional and the most upbeat loving person I have met. I worked with Stan over the years in downtown Willow Glen. He gave freely of his time to make the business district a better place. He was responsible for creating a brand and campaign that established downtown WG as "personal, friendly, different". I loved hearing Stan's stories. I will never lose the memory of Stan walking down the street from Peet's to his office each morning holding his cup of coffee with a big smile. Thank you for the tribute.

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