

Doug Sprague – 1932-2016



Doug Sprague

Former South Tahoe High School teacher Douglas Harmon Sprague died July 19, 2016. He was 83.

Doug was born Oct. 15, 1932, in Colton, Calif., the only child of Guy C. and Euleta Mae Sprague.

Doug was already active in the YMCA when he graduated from Van Nuys High School in 1950. After earning a bachelor's degree from UCLA and a master's degree from George Williams College, he became a YMCA director and camp leader, influencing and inspiring countless children and adults for the next 25 years.

He wrote a book about his experiences called "It Happened at Camp."

In 1967, as the founding director of the newly-opened Monterey Peninsula YMCA, he hired a young nurse for the summer camp named Virginia Keller. They married in December 1968.

In 1975, the family moved to Tahoe where he built a home and still worked intermittently with the YMCA in the Bay Area. At the beginning of the consumer computer age, Doug educated

himself in programming, bought the first computer model available at Radio Shack and by 1982 found himself teaching computer classes to students at STHS in the Regional Occupational Program.

In 1988, at the request of the STHS principal, Doug laid the framework and began the video production program, which included a TV studio within the high school. He started teaching video production classes which produced and broadcast a daily live news program to the entire high school, dubbed Viking Television (VTV). Many of his former students were influenced to pursue successful careers in the television, movie, and journalism industries. VTV continues, and has grown into the new TADA program at STHS. Even after retiring from teaching in 1994, he continued to take groups of VTV and performing arts students on memorable trips to Hollywood, visiting some of his previous students working in the film/TV industry, as well as observing working sets of shows in production. He organized 30 of these Hollywood trips, the last of which was at the age of 80.

He loved living in Tahoe, where he taught numerous people to water and snow ski, coached a Buddy Werner ski team, and indulged his love of Gilbert & Sullivan musicals by performing in "HMS Pinafore" and "Pirates of Penzance". As a volunteer with South Lake Tahoe Cancer League, he drove Tahoe-area cancer patients to appointments off the hill. He loved doing magic, performing as Professor Hockenloupier "with a capital Hock!" He loved spending time with his family, especially his extended Kritch family and his grandsons.

He is survived by his loving wife Virginia, son Todd (Amy), daughter Robin (Andy), and two grandsons, Douglas and Nick, as well as a great wealth of close friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to: South Lake Tahoe Cancer League; STHS Performing & Visual Arts Booster Association; Emergency Assistance Fund for YMCA

Professionals (Stitzer YMCA Center Second Floor, Springfield College, 263 Alden Street, Springfield, MA 01109).

A memorial service will be Aug. 12 at 1pm at Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church, 2733 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe. Share any pictures or stories via the Facebook page @DouglasHSprague.