

Sonny Bono – 20 years since he died at Heavenly

By Bruce Fessier, Desert Sun

Twenty years ago this week, Sonny Bono went missing at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

He was a Palm Springs icon, born Salvatore Phillip Bono to a Sicilian peasant and a second-generation Italian-American whose marriage was arranged when his mother was 14. In Washington, D.C., he was the Honorable Sonny Bono, Republican member of the House of Representatives for California's 44th District. But, to everyone else, he was Sonny.

He and his fourth wife, Mary, often went skiing around Lake Tahoe. Sonny had grown close to the late Bill Harrah, owner of the Harrah's Hotel and Casinos, when he and Cher were TV's biggest musical stars of the 1970s. Harrah's Lake Tahoe was like a second home to him.

Congress was on break, so, Sonny and Mary went skiing with some friends to usher in 1998.

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