



# The Train Sheet

News from the Feather River Rail Society and the Portola Railroad Museum

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## Robert Gene "Mike" Flannery September 14, 1924 - May 21, 2003

Robert Gene "Mike" Flannery, 78, died at his home in Hillsborough, California on May 21, 2003 following a long illness.

Mike was born on September 14, 1924, in Washington, Indiana. He graduated from Washington High School in 1942, and served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. In 1948, he graduated from Purdue with a bachelor of science. Later he received both an honorary and a doctorate from Purdue. Upon graduation he went to work for the New York Central Railroad. He also worked for the Penn Central, Western Pacific, Missouri Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroads.

He came to the Western Pacific at the request of Alfred Perlman, who worked with Mike from his days with the New York Central. Mr. Flannery eventually became President of the Western Pacific and just prior to the approval of Union Pacific's purchase of the Western Pacific and Missouri Pacific, became President of the Missouri Pacific due to the death of that roads president.

After the merger of these roads and the retirement of Union Pacific's President, Mr. Kenific, Mr. Flannery became Union Pacific's President. He retired from the Union Pacific in 1987.

Mike is survived by his wife of 51 years, Barbara, his daughters Julie Fenner, Jennifer Keleher and Amy John, his sisters Doris Kern and Dorothy Campbell, nine grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

At the family's request memorial donations may be sent to the Feather River Rail Society.

When the Union Pacific purchased the Western Pacific a

request was made to Mr. Flannery requesting a donation of one of the two remaining F7 "covered wagon" locomotives to have for a display to remember the WP in Portola.

On August 27, 1983, the newly painted 921 was formally donated to the, then, Greater Portola Area Chamber of Commerce at the first Feather River Railroad Days. The 921

was placed on public display at the Portola depot along with a UP SD40-2, a flag car and a caboose. After the event the unit was placed in the out of use diesel house for temporary storage. (921 was later transferred to the Feather River Rail Society.)

Before long a lease of the diesel shop and adjacent facilities was approved by Mr. Flannery as was a seemingly endless request for the donation of retired WP cars and locomotives. On one of Mike's visits to the museum we apologized for asking for so much equipment to which he stated, "if you don't ask, you don't get." Most requests were granted and to this end we have the largest collection of preserved equipment from any one railroad of any museum in the country.

After Mr. Flannery's retirement from the UP, his visits to the museum were less frequent. Hap Manit would run into him occasionally at the local market when he was staying at his condo at Plumas Pines Golf Resort.

We are very sad to learn of Mr. Flannery's passing and our condolences go to his wife Barbara, daughters Julie, Jennifer and Amy as well as to other surviving family members. We truly believe without the assistance and encouragement of Mr. Flannery, the Portola Railroad Museum would not exist, at least in the form it is today.

Thank you Mike.

