

Summit Valley pioneer Mark Eagleton dies

High Desert land developer was a 'big-picture thinker'

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HESPERIA — Mark Gail H. Eagleton, a land developer who helped forge portions of the High Desert, has died.

Known by many as a pioneer and icon of Summit Valley, Eagleton died on Dec. 16 at home, with his wife, Abigail, and family by his side. The developer was 57 years old when he passed away from kidney failure, according to friend Joseph W. Brady.

According to Eagleton's wife, the couple met at Flamingo Beach in Costa Rica in 2005 where her smile and long black hair drew his attention. She said the two were married three years later.

"I found a wonderful gentleman that changed my world forever," she said. "Mark became a special man in my life because of his kindness, his character and his way of how he expressed himself to me."

Eagleton's wife, who is from Nicaragua, said her husband was a man who stood up for himself and for others. She added that the "blending of cultures" made a positive impact on their marriage.

"This is because I am an independent person and a free-spirit woman," she said. "In my culture, men tend to be very controlling and Mark was the opposite. He always allowed me to express myself and he always said I was his butterfly."

Eagleton, along with his parents and a group of prominent dairymen from the Chino area, acquired the historic 7,000-acre Las Flores Ranch in Summit Valley and forged the partnership that was Summit Valley Ranch, which eventually evolved into Summit Valley Ranch, LLC, according to his family.

Despite the ups and downs of the real estate market, a failed attempt at establishing dairies, a few groundwater wars, forest fires, and the water adjudication, Eagleton headed up Summit Valley Ranch and never lost his vision of establishing a quality planned neighborhood and community.

"Mark was a simple but complicated individual, a big-picture thinker with a big heart," said Brady, president of the Bradco Companies. "I am saddened that he wasn't able to see his vision of a great community at Summit Valley Ranch."

Eagleton cherished the beauty and benefits of the Summit Valley area, and he loved the land and the "dirt." His enthusiasm and optimism for the Summit Valley area was endless, his family said.

Brady said he worked with Eagleton on many projects in the Summit Valley area and believes the duo sold more land in that region than anyone else. He added that his friend fully understood the dynamics, the topography, the engineering, the utilities and the development challenges in the area.

"It's not many times in your career that you have the opportunity to work side by side and so closely with a land developer who is so passionate about the development of the property and protecting its natural resources and benefiting the local city or municipality," Brady said. "What made our relationship unique ... one minute Mark was my co-broker partner and the next minute he was my client, which made for a rather interesting relationship that remains strong for nearly 20 years of our relationship."

Raised in the Laguna Beach area, Eagleton was an avid surfer, fisherman, bird hunter and golfer. He graduated from Long Beach State University with a degree in business and also held a California real estate broker's license. Eagleton also leaves behind his children Maria Teresa, Sofia, and Wesley.

Eagleton was remembered during a celebration of life Saturday at Summit Valley Ranch.

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