

## **Biography of Ron Ledford**

Ron was born in Ukiah on May 7, 1944 to Ray and Tillie (Matilda Lucchessi) Ledford. He resided all his life in Talmage, just as his mother did. His historical roots run deep in the community coming from an Italian immigrant family background. The Lucchessi family lived and worked in the Talmage area well over a century. Ron attended grammar school locally and was a graduate of Ukiah High School, Class of 1962. A pear farmer for over 30 years, he followed in his family's historical agricultural roots in the Ukiah Valley. Ron also invested in the community buying residential rental properties. Married for 48 years to Dorothy they have two children and five grandchildren.

Ron loved his community as much as the community loved Ron. He served on boards and civic organizations throughout his life in the community.

- For over 20 years he sat on the Board of Directors for the locally owned Savings Bank of Mendocino County. Fellow board members acknowledged and relied upon Ron's expertise relating to all real estate transactions of the bank.
- Appointed and reappointed by Governors of different political parties, Ron served for over 15 years on the 12<sup>th</sup> District Agricultural Association, Redwood Empire Fair, Board of Directors. Serving several times as the Board President and most importantly on the Finance Committee until his passing. Ron is credited with and highly respected for keeping the Fair in solid financial standing as funding from the State greatly decreased through the years of his service. He understood that this gem of State owned property was highly valued within the County for local events, entertainment and activities. Ron took charge of gaining private sector donations and volunteer work to keep the fair grounds and buildings maintained. One such project was a tree planting over the entire landscape along with the irrigation to support it. In addition, he faithfully supported yearly the 4-H/FFA Livestock Auction at the Redwood Empire Fair by purchasing many animals raised by local youth.
- As an agriculture leader, Ron served as a member of the California Pear Advisory Board and was honored one year as the Mendocino County Agriculturist of the Year by the 12th District Fair.
- Ron's volunteer work also extended to local government having served on the Mendocino County Planning Commission.
- Supported Living Housing Advisory Board: *'Ron was on our Supported Living Housing Advisory Board for Community Care. He provided valuable insight from the owner/landlord's experience. He also let us know when he had housing available that was suitable for our clients, and kept us up-to-date on rules and regulations from the local housing authority, Ford Street Housing, RCHDC or other private owners/landlords.'*

Judy Ponce, Independence Plus Programs Director  
Community Care Management Corporation  
Independence Plus Programs-SLP/Horizons/ISS

- Ron supported many charitable causes as a quiet financial benefactor, but an outgoing motivator, mover/shaker and planner of the many fundraisers he participated in especially for children and individuals with special needs in the Community. Included were the various activities of the Ukiah Host Lion's Club and the Jaycees. All the sports, for all ages, would not have been possible without the long time support of the Ukiah Lion's Club in which Ron was definitely a leader. His love of riding a bike as a youngster personally motivated him to annually contribute youth bicycles and helmets to the Ukiah Christmas Effort along with gaining support from others that every child needs to have this same childhood memory.
- Further, Ron was a member of the Ukiah Unified School District Educational Foundation. Through the years he served on and funded scholarship committees benefiting local college bound students.
- Ron was a supporter of the Grace Hudson Museum and Project Sanctuary.
- After Ron suddenly passed the family asked the community to donate to charitable organizations in his honor. The Ukiah Daily Journal had just started their annual fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club which was an organization specifically mentioned by his family. Night after night the paper published the daily contributions and an amazing number of donations were given in Ron's memory.
- This past summer the Ledford family, many friends and business associates again paid tribute to this fine man by holding a fundraiser in his name for the rebuilding of Anton Stadium. During these difficult economic times an unbelievable amount of over \$100,000 was raised locally. It was a sold out event. People gave as generously as Ron had given to the community his entire adult life.