

Beltrami

Continued from Page A-1

im CEO after predecessor John Ball was fired from the post.

"We brought Al back to calm things down and to bring some gentleness and levelheadedness back to the county," Wattenburger said. "He did a typical Al Beltrami outstanding job."

"He had a great sense of humor," remembered Mendocino County 1st District Supervisor Carre Brown, who began attending Board of Supervisors meetings in 1986 as the administrator for the Mendocino County Farm Bureau.

"I believe Al Beltrami was the longest-serving administrator in Mendocino County's history," Brown said, adding that he came back to fill in between successors several times over the next 20 years while the county worked to select a new one. The average length of time for a county CAO or CEO to serve after Beltrami's retirement was three to five years, according to Brown.

"He loved this county and the people here," Brown said. "Al has also been very generous to this community by being a benefactor for many worthy projects, and he also financed internships for college students in the county's administrative office."

Richard Shoemaker, who was on the Ukiah City Council when he began working with Beltrami in 1986, said he was impressed with the scholarship program Beltrami set up a few years ago for Mendocino College students who wanted to go into public administration.

"Al was the kind of guy who would share his experience and his knowledge with anybody who wanted it," Shoemaker said.

During his 10 years working with Beltrami on projects that required collaboration between the city and county -- including the municipal golf course and redevelopment, among others -- Shoemaker said, "I can't say I ever saw him angry. He would do whatever he could to try to get problems solved."

Part of the reason for his longevity with the county, Shoemaker guessed, was that Beltrami was good with people.

"He made a lot of people feel important, like their opinions meant something," Shoemaker said. "He may not agree with you, but he would discuss it with you."

He added, "Millions of people would say they were friends of Al; he treated you like a friend."

Brown remembered Beltrami's donation of framed maps to the county that showed Mendocino County's changing borders

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RICHARD SHOEMAKER

from the time California became a state to the present day, and his help establishing a new emergency unit at Ukiah Valley Medical Center, among other generosities.

"He's always given," Brown said. "Anytime there was a need, he and his wife, Pat, were there."

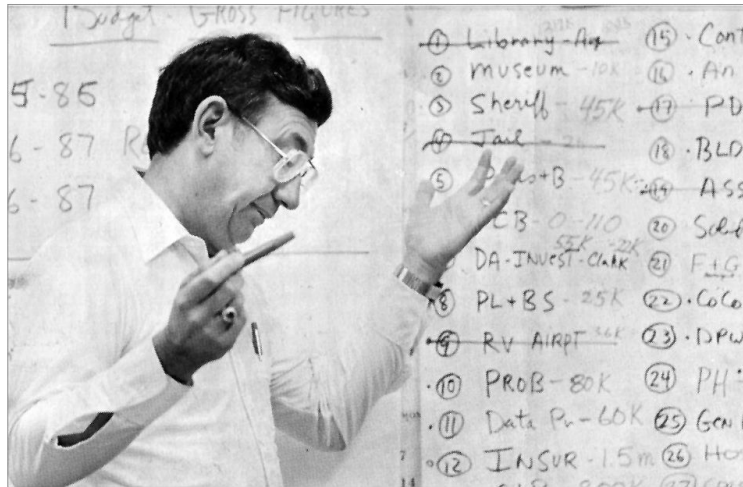
"He was a true gentleman," Wattenburger said. "He was a bridge-builder. He was stubborn.... I've lost a good friend."

"Today ... a legend in Mendocino County passed away," Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman wrote in a Saturday statement. "He worked with governors and federally elected officials to make things better."

Allman further remembered Beltrami "as a person who understood the need for our leaders to work with each other instead of fighting each other," and added, "Thank you Al for what you have done to make Mendocino County a better place to live, work and raise families."

Funeral arrangements have not yet been made, and will be handled by The Eversole Mortuary.

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(Above) County Administrator Al Beltrami helps the Board of Supervisors juggle numbers during a 1980s budget hearing. (Below) Beltrami at his desk shortly before his retirement in 1990.



LoBuck\$ grocery in Willits to be shut down