



## **2017 Valley of the World Hall of Fame Award**

### **Bill Ramsey**

Bill's history began, like many others from his era, with his parents moving west from Littlefield, Texas in 1930. They settled in Salinas during the Great Depression—with Bill entering the picture in 1932 as the tenth of 11 children. Bill was raised in the Alisal District, more commonly known as East Salinas today.

In 1951 Bill joined the US NAVY, and married his Salinas High School sweetheart, Marlene Sbrana. They spent their first four years living in the south, first in Memphis, Tennessee, then Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

When honorably discharged in 1955, Bill went to work for H.W. Mann. Most people knew him as Cy, but his business name was “H.W. Mann,” which he started in 1939. In 1967 Don Nucci joined the company. Cy, Don and Bill became partners in 1976. Cy passed away in 1996, and a short 10 years later Don passed away. Through these hard times the Ramsey and Nucci families persevered and have remained loyal partners. Bill has been actively involved in his community—and he has been honored to receive recognition through the years. In 1967 he received “The Young Man of the Year” from the Salinas Jr. Chamber of Commerce. After serving as President of the Salinas City School Board, he was given an “Honorary Life Time Membership” in the California PTA. In 1976 he served as President of the Grower Shipper Association of Central California; in 1994 he served as Chairman of the Board of Western Growers Association of California and Arizona; in 1995 he was appointed by Governor Pete Wilson to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Board; in 1996 he was presented with the “Agriculture Leadership Award” by The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, and was also honored with the “Distinguished Service Award” by the California Women for Agriculture. In 1999 the Western Growers Association presented him with their “Award of Honor,” in recognition of his dedication and service to the California and Arizona fresh produce industry.

Bill was privileged, twice in the 1990s, to testify before the United States Congressional sub-committee in Washington D.C. regarding their agricultural problems of the time, one being NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement) and PACA (The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act).

Like so many in this Valley, Bill held the local community close to his heart. His successes would not have been possible without the people of Salinas. Some of his fondest memories were made serving as a director of the California Rodeo for 15 years, as well as serving on both the Community Foundation for Monterey County and the National Steinbeck Center boards. In 2010 Bill was presented with the "E.E. Harden Lifetime Achievement Award" by the Grower Shipper Association of Central California. Although Bill dropped out of Hartnell way back in the early 1950s, he eventually became very interested in the college and served on the Hartnell Foundation Board, including holding the office of president. Under Coach Gary Shaw he served as president of the Hartnell Track Club and under Coach Marv Grim he was the Master of Ceremonies for the annual football banquet.

Bill was privileged to receive an Honorary Degree from Hartnell in 1994 and in 2016 he was inducted into the "Hartnell College Athletics Hall of Fame" as a volunteer and supporter.

Along the way Bill became a dedicated long distance runner, recording over 18,000 miles over a span of 25 years. He completed six marathons, including Boston in 1992, and while traveling to Japan and China, on behalf of the Western Growers Association, Bill took the opportunity to run in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and even took a short run on the Great Wall of China.

Bill takes great pride in watching Mann Packing grow, his community flourish, and his family blossom and become part of the agricultural history of the Salinas Valley. Bill is humbled, and honored, by the induction into the National Steinbeck Center's Valley of the World "Hall of Fame."

Bill and Marlene have 4 children, 11 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.