

Joseph Robert Falcone  
August 7, 1944 - January 2, 2019

Crescent City, CA

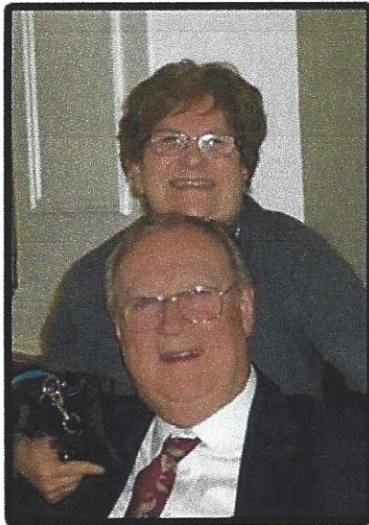
Joseph Falcone, a longtime Tracy resident, passed away on January 2 in Sacramento after a short illness. Joe was born in San Jose in 1944 and grew up on his family's apricot ranch on Winchester Blvd. He was president of the 1962 graduating class at Campbell High School, and earned a BA from San Jose State University while also serving in the Marine Reserves. In 1968 he married Diane Piazza and moved to Tracy, where he farmed, packed, and dried apricots under the label Orchard Gold for 42 years. He served on the boards of the Banta Carbona Irrigation District and the Apricot Producers of California. In 2009 he and Diane moved to a home of his own design on the Smith River outside Crescent City, where he welcomed many visits from friends and family. He loved the natural beauty of the area and was an avid fly fisherman.

Joe is the son of the late Salvador and Lillian Falcone, and is predeceased by his sister Marie Elena Falcone. He is survived by his loving wife Diane, his devoted children Arcadia Falcone and Janelle Plaskett (Scott), and his beloved grandchild Wesley Plaskett. His generosity of spirit will be missed by all who knew him.

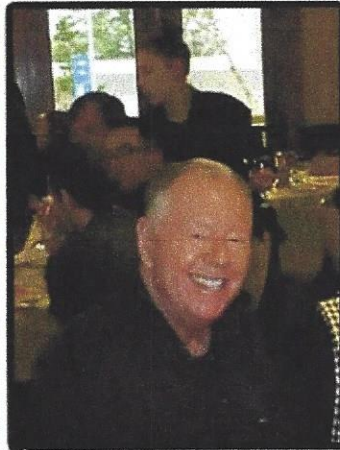
A memorial mass will be said at St. Lucy Catholic Church, 2350 Winchester Blvd., Campbell on Thursday, January 17 at 11:00 a.m., followed by interment at Santa Clara Mission Cemetery, 490 Lincoln St., Santa Clara. Flowers may be sent to Lima Family Santa Clara Mortuary, 466 North Winchester Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95050, or donations made to the Warriors & Quiet Waters Foundation, 351 Evergreen Dr., Ste. A, Bozeman, MT 59715.

Please scroll down for a tribute to our dear Joe.

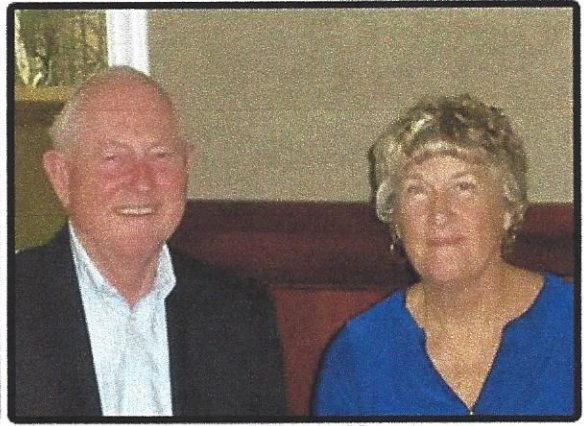
*Classmates celebrating Joe Falcone's life - A remarkable person, not to be forgotten...*



*Dave & Linda Buck*



*Dave Thompson*



*Paul and Helen Morey*



*Garry (Alfinito) Bishop*

*missing from the photo's  
Fred & Sherry Nootboom  
sorry if I missed anyone else.*



*Karen & Lee Ward*

*Donna & Hal Evans*



*Joe and his favorite  
fishing hat*



*Lynda (Faulkner) Smith - Becky (Putnam) Barberi*



*Jeff & Ingrid Goodere*

Tributes to Joe Falcone follow

## **Tribute to Joe from Craig Bradford**

Joe and I knew each other throughout high school, but we became especially close by the end of our junior year. That summer, Dave Buck, Joe, and I went on a challenging 13-mile backpack into the Yosemite wilderness to fish for trout. On the long drive over there, they picked me up at the Pacheco Pass Fire Station where I worked as a Forest Firefighter. In retrospect, our souls melded during that trip.

Joe, Dave and I had a great time during our senior year double dating, partying, shooting pigeons and quail on Joe's ranch, raising goats and pigs, and getting ready to graduate. We missed Leroy Ward, who graduated one year ahead of us in 1961. I felt blessed to spend a lot of time with the Falcone family that year. Of course Joe was our Senior Class President, which made things even more enjoyable for the rest of us. We went our separate ways for our first year of college when I attended U.C. Berkeley, Joe became a student at San Jose State, Dave Buck chose the University of the Pacific, and Leroy Ward continued to play football and chase girls at Cal Poly.

Joe and I became roommates during the second semester of our sophomore year in college. We lived in the Wheeler Apartments on Fifth Street just about a half mile from San Jose State University. What a wild time that was! Hal Evans often joined in the fun, and Leroy would come up on weekends to share the air with us. We lucked out . . . didn't end up in jail. Yes, the hospital, but no jail. Won't ever forget those days.

The time had arrived in the Fall of 1964 to get serious about life. The other guys knuckled down to become success stories in their own fields of endeavor. I left for the University of Utah, joined Sigma Chi Fraternity, and went into the U.S. Air Force from the Air Force ROTC in 1968 after completing one year of graduate work. During those four years in Utah, Joe and Dave visited for some serious fly fishing in the mountains and heavy dating that Sigma Chi arranged for them. Then one day, just before I entered active military duty, Joe called to say he'd met the love of his life, Diane Piazza. I'd never heard him so happy. She was then, and still is, very special.

We could go on and on with stories like this, but perhaps the most meaningful at this juncture is to relate what Joe did for me. Oh sure, Joe touched many of our lives over the years, but he truly made a difference in mine. I became a fighter pilot in the USAF and additionally a Special Air Warfare Tactical Specialist as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller. In those roles, I was trained to fly against both air and ground targets, and also engage enemy forces while involved in ground combat. I subsequently spent three consecutive, one-year combat tours in Southeast Asia in Vietnam and Laos. Every new day over that long period brought more violence. Wounded in action on four separate occasions, I also contracted Malaria, Typhoid,

and Tropical Sprue. Possibly the worst part of this seemingly unending scenario was immersion in Agent Orange, which still plagues me at the age of 75. Upon returning to the United States on the day before Christmas, war protestors threw eggs and rocks at my dad's car as we tried to escape out the back gate of Travis Air Force Base. I was simply shocked at this development, for the U.S. Department of Defense had kept us completely shielded from daily news occurring throughout the rest of the world. I became deeply sullen, could not engage in useful conversation even with my loving family, and remained totally unmoved by everything around me. The world didn't know what the term, PTSD, meant back then, but I clearly was affected. Joe came over to our home at my Dad's request. He tried to engage me in conversation, but I hardly could respond. After a few minutes of this, Joe announced, "We're going steelhead fishing, and I'm picking you up in the morning." We drove for 8 hours to Hiouchi in Del Norte County, where both of us ended up residing many years later. We fished from dawn to sundown on the Wild and Scenic Smith River amongst the Redwood trees. It was cold and often raining, but we caught big fish all day, every day, for 30 days. That simple "overhaul" brought me back to relative normalcy, and I was able to get back into the groove for a productive career. Had Joe not sacrificed whatever plans he and his family had over that Christmas season in favor of saving me from myself, I believe my life might have turned out quite differently. But, of course, I was just one of many. Joe cared for all of his friends. On behalf of all who were close to Joe, his recent passing will affect each of us for a long time to come.

Craig Bradford

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### **Tribute to Joe from Dave Buck**

Here is a story about Joe, Craig, and me. During one of the winters of our college years Joe and Craig wanted to learn how to ski. So I took them to Yosemite and gave them their first lessons at Badger Pass. They were not content to stay on the bunny hill and shortly after beginning we took the Eagle Chair (big one) up to the top. We scratched our way down to the first drop off. I went first to coach them how to make it down the steep part. Falcone (who actually became an excellent skier) put his skis in the tried and true V (snow plow) position and started down. His speed took him out of control and he struggled not to fall. His legs must have been pretty sore when he came to a stop near me...out of breath, and definitely charged from the excitement. Then it was Bradford's turn..... Not to be outdone he launched himself down a steeper part in the snow plow position. But, the snowplow can't slow you when you are on too steep a drop. Somehow Bradford managed to get to about 10 yards coming straight at Joe going full tilt. The only problem was he couldn't slow down. I

started yelling at him to fall down, but not Bradford. Seeing that a crash was unavoidable he pointed both poles out right at Joe. Bradford stuck him right in the chest with his poles and body. They both crashed on the spot. It remains one of the best illustrations of one of the brotherly mottos we three shared, "Hurray for me, and screw you!"

That brings to mind another Yosemite incident. Before Joe could go on a trip his mother would insist that we place a St. Christopher medallion on the dashboard to protect us on our travels. (I had a new '65 Mustang and really looked forward to racing on the twisty roads in and around Yosemite.) It was really snowy and icy even in the Valley so we took care not to do anything stupid. Until.....returning from Badger and a day of skiing we came to the Wawona Tunnel. Inside the tunnel road was dry and I used it to speed up. Bad idea. When we came to the exit the water drainage from the top of the exit had formed a sheet of black ice. When we hit it I lost control of the car and we spun around completely out of control. The windows were open. St. Christopher made a hasty exit sliding across the dashboard and out the window. We frequently recalled the lesson "When St. Christopher leaves the car, it's time to get out yourself."

So many memories of my friend Joe Falcone.

Dave Buck

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### **Tribute to Joe from Hal Evans**

Joe Falcone was one of the most wonderful people to come into my life. He wasn't like a brother to me, he was my brother. If you had the opportunity to meet him, you know exactly what I am talking about. Joe was one of those guys you wanted to be friends with. He was a dedicated husband, father, grandfather and friend. He mentored, befriended, and loved many. For over 60 years, Joe and I worked, fished, ate, hunted and traveled together. The only argument we would ever have was, when is happy hour? Joe will be missed by all. Personally, I am still trying to grasp the fact that we will not fish, drink, laugh or hug each other again. With the loss of my friend, the reality of mortality has set in. I am going to tell my friends and family more often that I love them, and I will hug them a lot harder and longer. I recommend you do the same.

Hal Evans