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An honor guard of marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen stood watch over the flag-draped casket containing the former President's remains.

photos by bill heard



Metro Buses Shuttled Mourners to Pay Respects to President Reagan

By BILL HEARD, Editor

special report: [Gallery](#)

(June 8, 2004) Metro Bus Operator Tony Bryant of West Valley Division 8 drove the first shuttle bus up the winding road to the Reagan Library, Monday morning.

The 12-mile trip from the Moorpark College parking lot is a journey to the past for thousands of Americans from across the land. They have come to Simi Valley to pay their respects to President Ronald Reagan, who died June 5 at age 93.

Traffic quickly built up on the 118 Freeway, Monday afternoon, and crawled down the access roads to the college. The jam had eased up by Tuesday morning. Finally out of their cars, many mourners have stood in line for hours for scrutiny by White House security officers sent out from Washington, D.



Sheriff's Deputy Winston Grant and Metro Bus Operator Tony Bryant were a team, making repeated trips from Moorpark College to the Reagan Library.

C.

Once past security, however, it has been only a short wait to board a lineup of some 25 Metro buses. Simi Valley Transit also provided four coaches on Monday.

If the solemn procession of mourners at the Reagan Library is the heart of the event, the shuttle service has been the powerful support. As many as 60,000 people may make the trip before visiting is suspended Tuesday night.

Shuttle staffing

Approximately 95 Metro Bus operators, drawn from a number of divisions, are staffing the shuttle bus runs. They are backed up by 14 supervisors and a group of field technicians

Most of the Metro employees assigned to the shuttles won't have an opportunity to pay their respects at the Library, but many consider their work during the event to be a tribute.

"We lost a great man," said Metro Bus Operator Jose Perez of Crossroads Depot Division 2. "I'm so proud to be involved taking people up to the Library today, and proud to be with Metro."

Luckily, according to Metro's on-site coordinator, George Trudeau, the cool weather brought by the heavy overcast has kept the crowds comfortable and the buses running smoothly. The buses made the round trip with seated loads.

"We want the people to have a good experience on a Metro bus," said Trudeau. "Also, pulling up the steep hill to the Library, we don't want to be overloaded."



A solemn procession of people from all walks of life circled the former President's casket hour after hour and throughout the night.

Visiting hours extended

Shuttle service began at about 11 a.m., Monday. Because of the overwhelming crowds, however, Reagan Library officials extended it from the original closing time of 6 p.m., Tuesday, until 10 p.m. – a period of about 35 hours.

And as the day drew on, Metro employees were keeping the buses rolling.

"The job always comes down to the operators," said San Fernando Valley General

Manager David Armijo. "They're our best ambassadors. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many of them to be out here and do something very good and important for the public."

As hundreds lined up outside the hilltop facility, Monday, Library Executive Director Duke Blackwood admired Metro's shuttle operation.

"Clearly, the tens of thousands of people who want to come up here are able to do so because of what you all are doing," he said. "It's an absolute Godsend to us."

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