

Ed Vandeventer Led SCRTD Rail Operations During Metro Blue Line Startup

- 'Father of the Renaissance of Rail in Los Angeles' Died Thursday at Age 61; [Memorial Service](#) is Thursday, June 12, in Hacienda Heights.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(June 6, 2003) Gale "Ed" Vandeventer, who led the Rail Operations of the Southern California Rapid Transit District from 1985 through the mid-1990s – including the early days of Metro Rail subway and light rail planning - died Thursday, June 5, from a heart attack while in the hospital. Mr. Vandeventer, who suffered from the complications of diabetes, was 61 years old.

Mr. Vandeventer is survived by Phyllis Vandeventer, his wife of 37 years, and three sons, Robert, 32; Peter, 24, and Michael, 17. He is also survived by his father, Owen Vandeventer, of Apple Valley.

A memorial service is planned for Thursday, June 12, at 12:30 p.m. at St. Matthews United Methodist Church. The church is located at 15653 E. Newton in Hacienda Heights. ([Directions: 60 east. Take the Hacienda Blvd. exit. Stay in the right most lane of the off ramp. Turn left onto Three Palms, right onto Hacienda Blvd., right at Newton and continue for about four blocks to church.](#))

Mr. Vandeventer joined the RTD on July 7, 1975, as a planner. When his unit was transferred to the scheduling department, Mr. Vandeventer developed and coordinated the freeway fare increment system for RTD buses.

His next assignment at the SCRTD brought Mr. Vandeventer to the post of superintendent of instruction, where he helped start up the RTD Blue Line by training train operators and rail transit operations supervisors.

Mr. Vandeventer was named Superintendent of Rail Operations for RTD in 1985.

"He was the person who headed up the start up of rail," said Rita Malone, Rail Division Transportation Manager who served with Mr. Vandeventer on the original start-up team for rail operations.

When he took a medical retirement, leaving the MTA on Dec. 1, 1997, he had overseen the start-up of Metro Rail. All three lines – Blue, Red, and Green – were already making tracks.

"Ed was a hands-on manager. He would sign on operations radio at 4 a.m. and not leave until about 10 or 11 p.m. at night," said Malone. "He was on board with the patrons, with the operators, with the supervisors. Everyone on the railroad knew Ed. He accomplished rail operation in Los Angeles."



SCRTD Superintendent of Rail Operations Ed Vandeventer in 1991 photo.

Viewpoint

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In the years that followed his departure from the MTA, Mr. Vandeventer remained active in his interests. His life-long love of rail kept him a member of the Orange Empire Railway Museum, where he had previously served as superintendent of railway operations, vice-president of museum services, and as a member of the board for many years.

Born Jan. 21, 1942, in Denver, Colorado, he arrived in Long Beach with his parents at the age of one. He graduated from Millikan High School in 1959, and earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the University of Southern California in 1964. He continued his studies while employed by the California Division of Highways, now Caltrans, and earned his master's in civil engineering in 1966 at USC.

A resident of Hacienda Heights since 1968, Mr. Vandeventer lived there with his family at the time of his death.

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