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Arthur Winston, at his retirement celebration held at Metro Headquarters, March 23, 2006.



Photo by Gary Leonard

### Arthur Winston Inspired Co-Workers, Symbolized Metro

- Metro icon died Thursday following a short illness
- 'He set a standard that will never be duplicated.'  
--CEO Roger Snoble

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(April 14, 2006) Arthur Winston, who retired March 22, 2006, as Metro's most senior employee, died Thursday evening at age 100. Respected for his integrity, dedication to service and unfailing good nature, he inspired his co-workers and in many ways symbolized the spirit of the agency.

Winston died in his sleep at about 8 p.m., according to a family spokesperson. Funeral arrangements are pending.

Winston had been hospitalized for dehydration and exhaustion at the Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles Medical Center for two weeks beginning March 24. He was released from Kaiser, April 6, and had

been recuperating at home in the company of family members.

"Our hearts are saddened to hear today of the passing of Arthur Winston who was truly a Metro icon," said CEO Roger Snoble. "Having worked on the job for more than seven decades, Arthur was a legend, a true inspiration, dedicated to his work and loyal to this agency."

"Though his passing comes as a shock to all of us here at Metro, his longevity, commitment and work ethic will continue to inspire us for years to come," Snoble added. "Our hearts and prayers go out to his family members and all of his co-workers at Metro. He set a standard that will never be duplicated. We are all honored to have known and worked with him and will miss him dearly."

**'Unparalleled example'**

"For all of us in Metro Transit Operations, Arthur Winston's life of service will stand as an unparalleled example of dedication to principles, commitment to excellence and pride in the American work ethic," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "We will never forget his smiling face, his tireless energy and the example of leadership he set for his coworkers. There will never be another Arthur Winston."

"Arthur has always inspired us with his dedication to work and his loyalty to the agency," said South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey. "Arthur, the man – a legend – will always remain in our hearts and memories."

"Arthur was a good man," said Neil Silver, president of ATU's Local 1277. "A major piece of transit history, all the way from the Pacific Electric Railway Company to the present, will be buried with him. We'll miss him; we all loved him. Arthur was quite a person, very unique, one of a kind."

The mood at the Arthur Winston Division 5 maintenance shop turned somber when workers learned of Winston's passing.

"I announced Arthur's death at our 6 a.m. meeting with shift workers and we observed a moment of silence," said Assistant Maintenance Manager Sergio Rubalcava. "It's very quiet here."

"We had just visited him on Wednesday evening," said Mechanic Renee Navarre McLin. She said Winston was resting peacefully at the South Los Angeles home where he had lived since the 1940s.

"Kenny (his great, great grandson) was reading a book about Shaquille O'Neal to Arthur," added Service Attendant Rochelle Wilson.

**100th birthday celebration**

On his 100th birthday and date of retirement, more than 150 co-workers, friends and relatives turned out to celebrate Winston's 76 years of service as a service attendant and team leader with a festive presentation and barbecue lunch at his namesake operating division in Chesterfield Square.

He arrived at the party aboard a special Metro Rapid birthday bus accompanied by the Chivas soccer team's mascot and cheerleaders.

During the event, he received a number of plaques and Metro mementos, along with the best wishes of Metro executives, co-workers, union leaders, elected officials and members of his extended

family.

A special squad of his favorite women, the Laker Girls, wheeled in a large birthday cake and applauded as he blew out the 100th Birthday candle.

That day and in the days before the celebration, Winston garnered national and international fame from numerous print and Internet articles and broadcast programs, including a live birthday interview aired on CNN.

**Official commendations**

He received commendations from the Los Angeles City Council, the county Board of Supervisors and the Metro Board of Directors, among many others. In 1996, he received a congressional citation as "Employee of the Century" from President Bill Clinton.

In his final months with Metro, Winston made the rounds of Metro offices and operating divisions to say goodbye and to speak a few words of inspiration to employees.

A non-smoker who wasn't fond of alcohol, he advised those he met to avoid stress and credit cards. "I don't have no credit cards. I'm not in debt. Don't owe nothing to nobody!"

Arthur Winston was born, March 22, 1906 in Okemie, Oklahoma Territory, some 20 months before Oklahoma was admitted to the Union as the 46th state in November 1907. He moved with his family to Los Angeles in 1918 at the age of 12.

In 1924, Winston was hired by the Pacific Electric Railway Company. In 1925, he married Frances Smith – a marriage that was to last for 63 years until her death in 1988. The day of her death was his only unscheduled absence from work. The couple had four children who later gave them five grandchildren.

**Division named in his honor**

Winston left the transit agency in 1928, but was rehired in 1934. In 1953, he marked 25 years with the Metropolitan Coach Line and was transferred to Division 5, which was renamed in his honor on March 21, 1997, the day before his 91st birthday.

In 1958, Winston observed his 30th anniversary on the job. He marked his first retirement in June 1971 with 37 years, four months of service.

Despite that milestone, he continued as the employee of a succession of agencies, including the SCRTD and Metro, until his retirement after another 34 years, nine months on the job.

With Winston's retirement in March, Transportation Operations Supervisor Ivan McCargo, 89, a 46-year veteran, became Metro's oldest employee. The most senior employee is now 70-year-old Operator Donald Dube, who has 47 years' service. Both men work at Carson Division 18.

Arthur Winston's survivors include his great granddaughter Brandii Wright, her son, Kenny, 4; and a grand niece, Yvette Chappell-Ingraham.

"We are so blessed to have had him in our lives; he leaves behind a great legacy," said Chappell-Ingram.

-- Rich Morallo contributed to this story.

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