

Dedication Ceremony

# *The Schweitzer Rose Garden*



Wednesday, June 29, 2005



*Frank J. Schweitzer, Sr.*



*Frank J. Schweitzer, Jr.*

## *Opening Remarks*

Mayor Bill Lentini, City of Brea

## *Historical Background*

Brian Saul, City Historian

Unveiling of the Schweitzer Plaque

## *Special Recognition*

LaVeta Daelweiler, Honoree

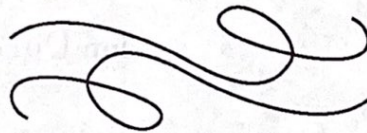
Don Schweitzer, Brea Museum Director

Preview of "LaVeta's Kitchen"

Refreshments will be served





A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and flourishes.

City of Brea  
Economic Development Department



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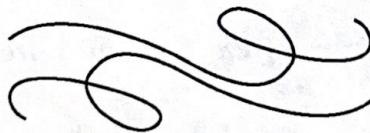
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## SCHWEITZER ROSE GARDEN DEDICATION

June 29, 2005

This is really a happy day, <sup>forme</sup> and it's great to look out there and see so many faces that I know and many that I don't know, but what makes me happiest of all is that you're all here today to celebrate and honor a truly remarkable family, one that has played, and is still playing, such a large role in the history of our city.

<sup>as Mayor Levine was speaking,</sup>  
Standing here, I <sup>couldn't</sup> help thinking that City Hall Park is the perfect spot for this ceremony because this park itself, including this rose garden and these buildings around us, are so intertwined with the history of the Schweitzer Family.

What I want to tell you then today is a little about that family history so you'll be able to appreciate like I do, just how lucky Brea has been to have the Schweitzers call this place home. I now it sounds trite, but this city might have looked a lot different than it does right now had the Schweitzers not lived here.

Well, as the story goes, it all began in 1877 about 2,500 miles away from here when Don's grandpa, Frank Schweitzer, Sr. was born in Toledo, Ohio. It took him a whole 28 years but he finally made it here to this area and settled in Olinda as a machinist in a tool shop run by W.D. Shaffer.

That same year of 1905 he sent for and married his sweetheart Julia Meissner, and 4 years later their daughter



Dorothy was born. Two years after that in 1911 a son was born who they named Frank Jr. That was Don's dad.

In 1912 the family moved out of Olinda and headed here to the new little town of Brea where they built a house on Madrona Ave. and Frank worked for a time at a gasoline extraction plant. He and some friends then got together and began the Brea Tool Works Co. which eventually was to become Shaffer Tool Works.

In 1916 when the drive for incorporation of Brea as a real city was taking place, Frank was right out there in front pushing the effort.

He was so well respected in the community that when one of the very first directors, or councilmen, of the new city resigned after 3 months, Frank was asked to take his place. He agreed, but little did he know then that he'd be serving for 21 years.

Did he ever become mayor in all those years? Nope. Why? Because, even though he had lots of opportunities, he always refused saying he's rather be a worker than the boss.

So, what were some of Frank's accomplishments? Well, thanks to him we're standing, or sitting, here in a park and not in a parking lot because he negotiated with the Union Oil for the land here, and then when the land finally belonged to the City, he designed the initial plans for the park and the building of a permanent city hall.

A little interesting sidelight regarding city halls is that in 1922, six years before that building over there was built, there were plans to build another city hall on the corner of Birch and Brea Blvd. where the Edwards Theaters are now.



Whatever happened to that idea, I never was able to find out.

Anyway, some other reasons to thank Frank are the paving of Brea Streets, the bringing of water to the city, the replacement of all the town's outhouses with a real Sewage Disposal Plant, which was located along Brea Creek, and the 1934 Brea Welcomes You sign.

*on the  
right of  
the street which  
half of the  
Brea Golf  
Course*

For those of you who remember it hanging over Brea Blvd., Frank designed the cantilevered bridge that it was attached to and which stretched from one side of the street to the other.

There's something interesting about that sign that I'm not sure a lot of people are aware of and that I discovered by accident. One day I was walking by and looked up at it from the side, and what I noticed was that Frank had designed it so that the sign itself hung at a slight angle so that whichever way you were approaching it on Brea Blvd., it always faced you directly.

Both Frank and Julia were very active in community affairs. In 1914 they jointly helped to establish the Brea Christian Church, and she served as its Supt. of its Sunday School classes for over 30 years. She was also a charter member of the Brea Women's Club. Frank was an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Brea Lions Club until his death in 1960.

Oh, I forgot to tell you earlier that coincidentally they both cared for this park's original rose garden which is a great tie-in to what we're doing here today.

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So, now we'll move on to Frank Jr. who many of you, I'm sure, still remember.

As I told you before, he was born in 1911, and 5 years later attended the Brea Grammar School, the current Jr. high, the year it opened. He also was in the 1st graduating class of Brea-Olinda High School of students who had started there as freshmen. That was in 1929, the same year the Plunge first opened for business.

I remember sitting with Frank in 1990 on one of those benches over there interviewing him for a history video piece I was doing, and among other things, he told me that after he graduated, he went to city hall over there, applied and got the job as summer lifeguard at the plunge. I know he wasn't paid much because he said that an elderly woman, a Mrs. Gurly, was hired as pool matron in charge of the plunge and was paid just 40 cents an hour.

After the summer and I'm sure with a good tan, <sup>Frank entered</sup> ~~he went~~ to Fullerton College, and later earned an engineering degree from the University of California at Berkeley.

Returning to Brea, he joined his dad at Shaffer Tool Works and eventually became its Chief Engineer.

Then, in 1938 on a blind date he met and later married Eltha Ruth Huntington of Anaheim. They had 3 children:



Charles, Donald + James or  
Chuck, Don and Jim.

Like his dad, Frank was on the Brea City Council for several years, being elected in 1950.

From 1960 to 62 he served as mayor, and later when asked what he was most proud of during his time on Council, he said it was spearheading the annexation of a large portion of land just east of town. (Brea had beaten out Fullerton for the land by just one day. *In the negotiations*

So, what other things was Frank involved in?

He was a member of the Brea Christian Church, the North Orange County YMCA and the American Red Cross.

He and La Veta Daetweiler<sup>also</sup> helped establish the Brea Historical Society and the yearly Brea Bonanza Days, and according to La Veta, whenever Frank got his teeth into something, he held on like a bulldog! That probably also was the case when he earlier headed the 1967 Golden Jubilee which celebrated Brea's 50th birthday.

By the way, there's this great old photo on the Society's collection of Frank with this terrific beard that Frank grew for the celebration.

Speaking of pictures, when the Society began, Frank was the one who donated from his own collection most of the original old photos which became the basis of the Society's collection. *core*

Over the years Frank was honored as Brea's Citizen of the Year and later with the Citizens Make a Difference award. Then, in 1992 he served as Citizen Grand Marshal in

the parade down Birch St. during Brea's big 75th birthday Jubilee.

Riding in the car with him, of course, was Ruth who had also been very active in Brea. Over the years she had been the president of the Brea Women's Club and the Brea Republican Women. She had also actively worked with Meals on Wheels and the Brea Christian Church for many years.

Like Frank, she had also received several honors during the years, one of which was Brea's 1971 Woman of the Year.

After truly two lifetimes of service, Frank passed away in 1993 and Ruth early last year. They were great people, and like Frank Sr. and Julia, truly deserving of the honor we're giving them today.

Currently, as we all know, we have a 3rd generation Schweitzer on the City Council, but before I introduce him, I'd like the 4th generation, Ashley and Taylor, Don's daughters, to come up here to officially uncover the plaque and then afterwards to help plant two new rose bushes to be a part of this garden honoring their grandparents and great-grandparents.

Ashley and Taylor.....

Don.....