

Copyright 2000 McClatchy Newspapers, Inc.  
Fresno Bee (California)

February 20, 2000, Sunday FINAL EDITION

SECTION: MAIN NEWS; Pg. A1; INFOBOX - YEAR ENDER

LENGTH: 1663 words

HEADLINE: Maddy is dead at 65 Legislator who represented the Valley for 28 years loses his fight with lung cancer.

BYLINE: Mike Lewis THE FRESNO BEE

DATELINE: SACRAMENTO

BODY:

Former state Sen. Kenneth L. Maddy, a career legislator, horse racing enthusiast and one of his generation's most respected and popular politicians, died early Saturday after a 14-month battle with lung cancer. He was 65.

The one-time Republican candidate for governor represented the Central Valley for nearly 30 years before term limits forced him out of office in 1998. He died shortly after midnight in his room at Sutter Memorial Hospital following months of intensive radiation and chemotherapy.

In a breathtaking outpouring of grief for a person who made his career in the combative, divisive world of politics, friends and former colleagues mourned the loss of the charismatic politician who eschewed knee-jerk partisan squabbling to become a powerful GOP leader and deal maker who earned the respect and trust of conservatives and liberals.

San Francisco's Mayor Willie Brown Jr., a veteran politician known for his unflappable cool, cried as he recalled Mr. Maddy.

"Make sure you include in whatever you write about this exceptional human being that first and foremost he was an incredible man, an incredible friend to all of us," said the former Democratic Assembly speaker who sparred and laughed with Mr. Maddy for 26 years in the Legislature.

Gov. Davis, a Democrat, called Mr. Maddy his "personal hero."

"He was a man of grace and enormous gifts," the governor said in an interview. "I believe he went into politics to serve people. He was a problem solver and I admired him greatly."

Mr. Maddy's fiancée, Marie Moretti, was at his bedside when he died.

"Ken was a wonderful person," she said. "What all of his friends say, that he changed their lives, it's true. There are so many people who love him.

"Like me."

Mr. Maddy's death marked the end of a year-long, bittersweet tour of California as politicians from all ideologies rushed to honor him after hearing that the nonsmoker had been diagnosed with advanced lung cancer. California State University, Fresno, founded a Kenneth L. Maddy Institute for the study of politics. The institute is expected to offer leadership seminars for students pursuing a career in public policy and is viewed as a training ground for elected officials.

Davis, who declared a state Ken Maddy day last fall while in Fresno for a conference, said he had a tough time keeping his composure at the podium as he thought about the reason behind these hurried tributes.

"I was really fighting back my emotions to keep from losing it," he said. "There are only a few things that evoke that sort of emotion in me: veterans, my wife and Ken Maddy."

On Saturday, hours after Mr. Maddy died, Santa Anita Raceway stopped racing and betting for a period of silence and Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y., held the first anniversary of the Ken Maddy Stakes.

"I just wish he could have been there," Moretti said.

Born Kenneth Leon Maddy in Santa Monica and raised with his sister, Marilyn, nearly in the shadow of Hollywood Park, Mr. Maddy's first love as a child was horse racing.

He once said: "Horse racing was the only thing we did as a family. It was the only thing my mom and dad agreed on."

As a child he did everything he could to stay near the track and the horses. He mucked stables, worked as a groom and later as a "hotwalker," the low-paid help that walks the horses after races to cool them down.

At Inglewood High School, he was football team captain and a star student.

"I always seemed to end up in a leadership position," he once said. "Deep down, I guess that's where I felt I belonged."

He played football at Fresno State College, where as a standout offensive lineman he played against a San Jose State College player named Bill Walsh, and served in the the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

At Fresno State, he met and married his first wife, Beverly Chinello. During his first hitch in the Air Force, his father-in-law, who ran a Fresno law firm, asked him what he was going to do with his life.

"I looked at him and I said, 'law school,'" Mr. Maddy said with a laugh in an earlier interview. "What was I going to say?"

He graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles law school in 1963 and moved back to Fresno. The local Republican party came calling in 1969 for the vacant 32nd seat. Mr. Maddy ran.

Sal Russo, one of Mr. Maddy's closest friends and his longtime GOP political adviser, remembers the race. He was walking precincts for Mr. Maddy's opponent.

"It didn't take me long to realize I backed the wrong guy," Russo said Saturday. "But I was smart enough to get to know Ken soon after that and we've been friends ever since."

In a district with 31% registered Republicans, Mr. Maddy took 57% of the vote. He would hold the Democratic district for eight years and his 14<sup>th</sup> District senate seat for another 19, even through several reapportionments designed by Democrats to diminish the influence of Republican votes.

In 1978, Russo convinced Maddy to enter the Republican primary for governor against Attorney General Evelle Younger, Los Angeles Police Chief Ed Davis and San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson.

Mr. Maddy, whose wit and candor was endearing if not an occasional political liability, opposed popular Proposition 13 as bad policy and once admitted in an interview that he had twice tried pot. Still, he finished third in the race with 18% of the vote -- besting the San Diego mayor.

"Ken had not only brains and guts, but heart," former Gov. Wilson said Saturday. "It wasn't just his dark good looks, the ready smile and laugh, but that great heart that made him so personally magnetic and one of the truly great legislators of the 20th century."

But under the pressure of politics and his long stretches away from Fresno, Mr. Maddy's first marriage foundered, ending in 1980. One year later, he married Norma Foster, the widow of Paul Foster of Foster Farms.

Through his legislative career, Mr. Maddy wrote hundreds of bills -- 45 for the horse racing industry -- and directly negotiated seven state budgets while taking a large role in many others. He said the pressurized negotiations gave him the most pleasure; it gave him a place to show his skills at bringing together diverse groups.

Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles, said Mr. Maddy's style should be a lesson to all lawmakers.

"He is the prototype of the legislator who works across the aisle to get things done," Villaraigosa said. "He stood out. He was a consensus builder and a man of his word."

In Sacramento, Mr. Maddy could often be found at his second office, the corner booth at venerable Frank Fats, where steaks and political deals were cut at the same tables.

Seldom was he there without one of his best friends, former Sen. Bob Beverly, R-Manhattan Beach.

"For 30 years, he was about the closest friend I had," Beverly said Saturday, his booming voice reduced to a whisper. "We ate at Fat's two or three nights a week. He was loyal to me and I to him."

While Mr. Maddy enjoyed more political success and power than most Sacramento lawmakers, he never recovered from the sting of two bitter political defeats. The first came when then-Gov. George Deukmejian passed over an expectant Mr. Maddy to appoint Congressman Dan Lungren as state Treasurer when the job became vacant midterm. Mr. Maddy, privately, had been assured the job was his and both parties agreed to confirm him. Lungren, intensely opposed by Democrats, ended up losing the appointment.

The second came in Aug. 24, 1995, when Orange County Republicans, led by millionaire businessman Rob Hurtt, ambushed Mr. Maddy in a caucus meeting and ended his eight years of leadership on a 9-7 vote. He was betrayed by three legislators who said they supported him. Mr. Maddy always felt badly used when his trust was misplaced.

Because of this, Mr. Maddy's career plateaued even though he was courted for other state and federal offices. After he left office, he joined the public relations firm Fleishman-Hillard and began to put more time into his personal life, his horses, golf and his children and grandchildren. Even after his second marriage to Foster ended in 1998, Mr. Maddy remained close to his stepchildren and grandchildren.

Cattle baron John Harris, co-owner of several race horses with Mr. Maddy and one of the former senator's oldest friends and political supporters, said his friend was looking forward to see one of their young horses run, an aptly named Cut the Deal.

"I thought he was going to beat this thing," Harris said, his voice cracking. "I kind of kept thinking he was going to win."

Mr. Maddy is survived by his mother, Anna Thomas; sister Marilyn Brazell of Citrus Heights; son Donald Paul Maddy; daughters Deanna Hose of Sacramento and Marilyn Geis of Fresno; six stepchildren; five grandchildren; and 13 step-grandchildren.

Mr. Maddy's family will hold a private funeral. They asked that memorials be sent to the Kenneth L. Maddy Institute at CSUF; the Kenneth L. Maddy Equine Analytical Chemistry Laboratory at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine; or Sacramento Area Youth Golf.

Russo said there will be a public "celebration of Ken's life" within two weeks.

"Ken always hated long speeches," Russo said, "and he asked that no one be subjected to them on his part."

INFOBOX

KEN MADDY MILESTONES

Kenneth Leon Maddy is born May 22, 1934, in Santa Monica.

Graduates from UCLA law school in 1963.

Wins state Assembly seat in 1970.

Loses race for governor in 1978.

Elected to state Senate in a special election in 1979.

Leaves state Senate in 1998 because of voter-approved term limits. "It isn't like I didn't have a life before this," Maddy says at the time.

Diagnosed with lung cancer in January 1999.

Joins Fleishman-Hillard, a public relations firm, as a partner and senior vice president.

The Kenneth L. Maddy Institute of Public Policy at California State University, Fresno, is dedicated in October 1999.

Dies Saturday in Sacramento at age 65.

GRAPHIC: THE FRESNO BEE Ken Maddy earned respect from both sides of the Capitol aisle.

Ken Maddy

ERIC PAUL ZAMORA -- THE FRESNO BEE Ken Maddy follows the action at the state Senate during the last days of his final term in 1998. Maddy represented the Valley for 28 years.

SPECIAL TO THE BEE Ken Maddy fell in love with horse racing at an early age, spending summers working as groom at Del Mar Race Track near San Diego. Maddy's legislative career was marked by his involvement in the industry.