

Vail Daily's View: Gerald Gallegos built community

Day laborer to stone magnate gave much back

VAIL DAILY EDITORIAL BOARD

VAIL, CO, COLORADO,

Gerald Gallegos was a bridge and a mountain.

He bridged Vail today to an era before Vail existed. He bridged rich and poor, Hispanic and Anglo cultures, small business and large.

And he was a mountain in philanthropic instinct — particularly when it came to children.

Most of all, he might have been as good a model as could be found in America for how to live properly.

His death late Wednesday night stunned the valley, although friends and family knew he was ill and the conclusion of it inevitable.

At 61, he was still too young to leave us. But he lived his life fully. It's hard to conclude he was cheated. That wasn't his way.

Here was a teenage laborer who helped build Vail who had the moxie to start his own little masonry company at the age of 21. Then he and brother Bob made it the best of its kind just about anywhere.

They did it by outworking the competition, learning the craft, turning craft to art and building a company renowned for how well it takes care of employees and clients with offices in several states.

He didn't just do stonework. He lived and breathed it. He never stopped learning more about it.

His interest in the possibilities with cold stone carried over to his passion for helping kids. He helped found The Youth Foundation and served on such boards as the Vail Valley Foundation, Roundup River Ranch, El Polmar Foundation and Minturn Community Fund, as well as wide involvement in a host of other causes large and small to everyone but a child in need who received help from Gallegos.

He was known as quiet and friendly, while supremely interested and a doer.

In many ways, he was the pride of Battle Mountain High School, from which he graduated, and of the entire community he helped build in more ways than one.

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