



## **HENRY N. WOCHHOLZ, COMMUNITY LEADER AND LONGTIME YUCAIPA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER, DIES AT 92**

***Wochholz is best known for leading the District's 15-year battle to build the regional wastewater treatment and recycling facility***

YUCAIPA, December 4, 2018 — Henry N. Wochholz, a highly regarded business and community leader who served for 41 years on Yucaipa Valley Water District's board of directors, passed away on November 24, 2018. He was 92.

Wochholz was elected as one of the first board members of the Yucaipa Valley Water District, beginning his service on October 19, 1971. He served continuously on the board until February 7, 2013.

A longtime banker who volunteered his time and expertise on numerous boards in both Yucaipa and Calimesa, Wochholz is best known for leading the 15-year battle to build a sewer collection system and treatment plant to protect Yucaipa Valley's groundwater in the 1970s and 80s from failing septic systems and degrading groundwater supplies.

Even though construction of a sewer treatment system was mandated by the State Regional Water Quality Control Board due to septic system contamination, many Yucaipa Valley residents were fiercely opposed to paying for a wastewater treatment plant and filed multiple lawsuits to stop the project.

But while sewage treatment plant opponents succeeded in delaying the project, they couldn't stop it. They also failed in their efforts to recall Wochholz from the Yucaipa Valley Water District board.

Upon completion in 1986, the Yucaipa Valley Water District named the wastewater treatment plant in Wochholz's honor.

"This is a very emotional thing for me," Wochholz told the *San Bernardino County Sun* in a September 18, 1986 interview after the Henry N. Wochholz Wastewater

Treatment Plant began operations. “For the community, the sewer plant will allow us to preserve our quality of life regarding water protection,” he said. “We can also preserve the conditions in the valley as we want things to be. The building prohibition has stifled proper growth and denied people the opportunity to do with their property as they see fit.”

The wastewater treatment plant has been expanded and enhanced with new technology, filtrations system, and reverse osmosis membranes that enable the Yucaipa Valley Water District to recycle wastewater and produce ultrapure water that can be used for landscape irrigation purposes and groundwater recharge.

Now known as the Henry N. Wochholz Regional Water Recycling Facility, the facility has a brine disposal pipeline that extends to Orange County to eliminate the buildup of salts and minerals in the local groundwater supply.

Wochholz was involved in Yucaipa Valley water issues even before being elected to serve on Yucaipa Valley Water District’s first board of directors in 1971. In 1966, Governor Pat Brown appointed him to serve on Calimesa Water District’s board, where he became familiar with water and wastewater issues across the valley.

A native of Albion, Michigan, Wochholz graduated from the University of Michigan in 1948 with a degree in economics and industrial psychology.

According to the *Redlands Daily Facts*, Wochholz joined Security First National Bank as a teller in its Riverside office in June 1951, when it was known as Citizen’s National Trust and Savings. He later served in the consumer loan department of the bank’s San Bernardino branch before moving to the Yucaipa branch in 1957. He was appointed manager of the Calimesa branch in 1961. He worked for the bank for 32 years.

“He became known for his genuine, friendly, charismatic charm and the respect he gave to his customers,” the *Yucaipa News-Mirror* wrote in an October 12, 2006 article highlighting Wochholz’ career and community involvement and the naming of Yucaipa Valley Water District’s recycling plant in his honor.

Wochholz was active with the Calimesa Chamber of Commerce, serving terms of president, past president and other positions. He was a charter member of the Optimist Club. He also served as treasurer of the Yucaipa Valley Little League.

Wochholz was also active with the city of Calimesa, serving on the city’s original incorporation committee in 1990. He was subsequently appointed by the Calimesa City Council to serve on the city’s General Plan Committee and on the Calimesa Planning Commission, according to a February 1, 1993 report in the *San Bernardino County Sun*.

He also served on the Riverside County Flood Control District board, the City of Calimesa’s Housing Appeals Board, and the Calimesa Cultural and Performing Arts Association.

After retiring, Wochholz volunteered at Wildwood Elementary School for more than a dozen years where he helped students improve their reading skills.

Wochholz will be interred at Riverside National Cemetery beside his wife Fran.