

# “I am the President!”

By Steve Stillwell

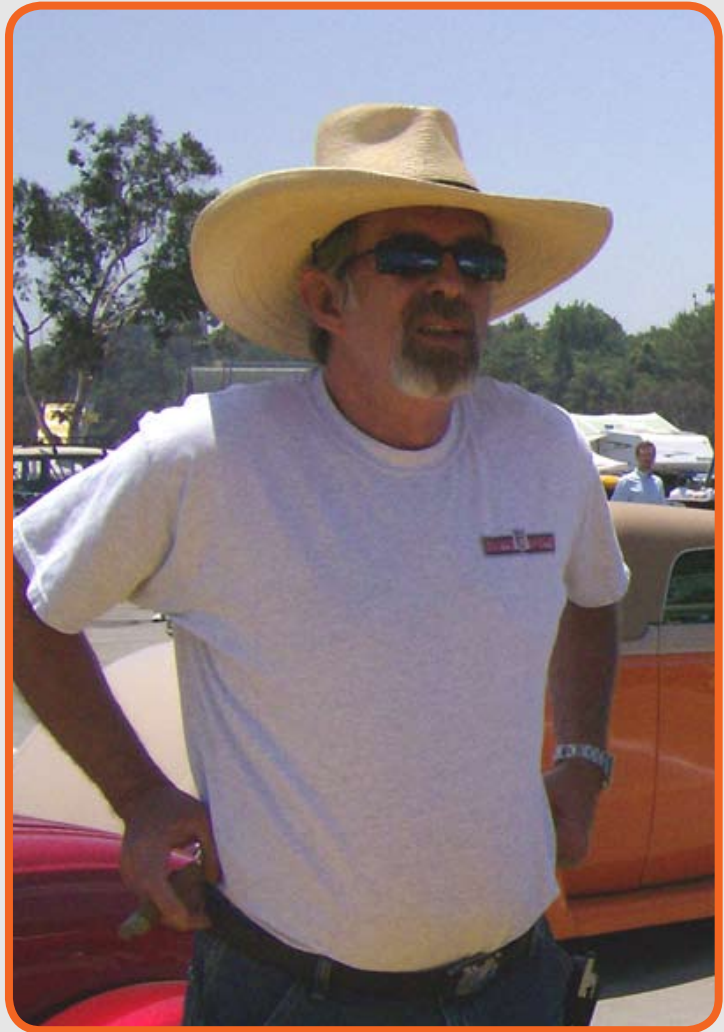
If wealth is measured by the number of your personal friends, then Jeff Hornsby died a wealthy man. Jeff was actually a very intricate person whose life extended farther than his love of custom Ford trucks. He had been an active member of Pickups Limited decades ago, rejoining the Orange County Chapter in March of 2005. The Chapter had less than 10 active members when he and his full-time side kick, Ed Oe, jumped in with both feet. Being very active at truck shows and club activities, he and Ed were rewarded by being voted in as President and Vice President respectively. One of his first directives was to eliminate our second meeting of the month, opting to gather at various runs and cruises for the second monthly get together. Getting club members and their trucks visible soon swelled our club roster to 40-plus members!

Jeff was born Jeffery Ernest Hornsby on October 4, 1945. Growing up in Southern California, his brother Skip described him as a kid “having a strong personality” He adopted a love for street rods and trucks early in life, interrupted by a 4 year stint in the Navy, on September 10, 1964. He may not have agreed with war, having fellow soldiers maimed and scarred for life, however, he reflected on those years of camaraderie with fond memories. During his Navy years he was a self-described, rebellious, hippy-looking Vietnam River Rat. As he once told me, “Don’t think that everyone who serves in the Navy gets to live aboard large ships, sleep in a bed and eat three squares.”

Back in the states, Jeff established his own electrical contracting business, most jobs coming from referral work through friends. He was also an active member of Masonic Gateway Lodge 339. In 2007 Jeff received the Hiram award one of the highest you can achieve as a Freemason.

Without question, Jeff’s Mattel inspired ’56 was our club’s most photographed pickup. Hard to believe 25 years ago his ride served as his electrical business work truck fit with a commercial truck box! It came a long way through the years and he never tired of tinkering on his prized possession.

Jeff left us all on January 14, his final goal being to marry Debbie, his soul mate of these past 20 years. Losing him proves just how fragile life really is. Whenever I see one of those huge palm straw cowboy hats in the distance or catch the drift of a fat Cohiba cigar, I will be checking to see if Jeff has dropped in on us. Hard to believe he is gone. Jeff will be missed.



This is not an obituary but a celebration of the influence Jeff Hornsby had on my (our) lives. There are a multitude of folks who knew Jeff Hornsby a lot better than I did, and that's because I am a relatively new player in the varied and interesting life of the man I came to appreciate and admire as a person, leader and friend.

I joined the Pickups Limited club with Jeff as the transition president and like most members I was wet behind the ears and clueless as to what was going on; little did I know how the membership and relationships would grow under Jeff's Presidency. Not only did Jeff increase the size of our club from ten or so members to more than forty, but he also coined and held steady to his club motto which was "FUN".

Under Jeff's guidance the club built a working relationship with Debbie Baker and the Cruise for a Cure, volunteering to help mark parking spaces and lay out the grounds prior to the cruise day, all for a great charity. The Edlebrock, Rev'ed Up 4 Kids charity car show was another result of that special relationship. John Force Race Station cruise nights and the special October show wherein the Orange County Chapter is the host club. Our special relationship with all the other chapters and car clubs and their participation in the many events and cruises that occurred or were spurred on as a result of knowing him. Jeff said "It's hard for me to put into words the feeling I get when I pull into a parking lot to see trucks parked and the drivers and passengers" "You have to smile when you see Walt with a jar of cherry's or Dee and Peaches, Debbie Baker in her golf cart even Bill DeGaine has his moments and who can forget Craig from the John Force Race Station and what they have done for us. We all have friends we only see at car shows and to steal a line from Little Big Man, "My heart soars like the eagle to see you, seems the best way to describe the effect of spending time with all of you." Jeff was at his best when writing of his love for the sport and of his fellow truckers."

Jeff was there for us when needed, in my case it was help with a power window electrical problem I encountered. Jeff said he envisioned a club of friends interacting with each other and helping each other when needed. Dale knows what Jeff was talking about, as does Dusty and Rudy and Bill and Larry and so many others who have helped or have been helped by the PUL membership. I think he got his wish. And speaking of helping others, did you know Jeff was a Freemason? Their belief in helping others, upholding truth and charity toward others, best exemplifies their having honored Jeff with their highest award in 2007 by presenting him with the Hiram Award. I was honored to have been invited to the ceremony and was equally impressed with the charitable activities that Jeff had been involved with.

It is safe to say Jeff had such a positive effect on our lives and that of many others unknown to us, that I feel all who knew him are both surprised and saddened at his passing. That's not to say that Jeff didn't share the same human faults and frailties of the rest of us, but I know it's safe to say that God has a lot of good reasons to let Jeff in the big garage upstairs. Each of us will remember and miss him, but let me finish by using his words to inspire us to keep on truckin'. Jeff said, "I asked myself why I joined the club. The First reason was I had a truck that I loved, (I must, because I have had it for over 30 years) and I wanted to be around people that felt the same way. Second, it's fun to hang out with others that like the things that I do. Third, the vast amount of knowledge our members have about our old trucks. It's really simple FUN". "I have said before that I am having so much fun it's going to take a plastic surgeon to get the smile off my face and that's because of the members of this club. Thank you all".

We will miss him... Dan Cangro