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Obituary: Dudley Holman was twice mayor of Woodland

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Dudley Holman, a dynamic Woodland political figure who served the community as mayor, civic watchdog and volunteer, died Tuesday at age 83.

He died of complications from recent heart surgery, said his daughter Cindy Pulliam.

Mr. Holman ran for office after regularly attending Woodland City Council meetings for two years to learn how government works. He was elected in 1980 to the first of three terms on the council, which awards the mayor's job to the top vote-getter in city elections. He was mayor from 1986 to 1988 and from 1990 to 1992.

Conservative and plain-spoken, he was the longest-serving council member and a voice of experience as Woodland grew from Yolo County farm town to booming Sacramento suburb. He supported a major new sewer treatment system, renovation of the library and restoration of the historic Woodland Opera House.

He stood out in town, waving to constituents from behind the wheel of a 1965 Volkswagen Beetle painted the same yellow as city firetrucks. He never left home without two pins attached to his shirt collar: an American flag on one wing, a green-and-gold tree inscribed "Woodland, City of Trees" on the other.

Although popular with voters, he supported term limits for politicians and declined to seek re-election in 1992. He never missed a meeting in 12 years on the council.

"He was in the middle of every fight you could imagine," Yolo County Supervisor Matt Rexroad said.

Mr. Holman was a forceful advocate for public education and involvement in civic affairs. He supported televising council meetings and volunteered as a camera operator for Woodland Public Access. He opposed eminent domain actions and spoke out against government waste as president of the Yolo County Taxpayers Association.

He delivered food to seniors weekly for 25 years as a Meals on Wheels driver. He took candy to Woodland firefighters every Christmas to thank them for protecting residents. He was a volunteer or board member for several groups, including the Salvation Army, the Yolo County Fair and the Woodland Chamber of Commerce.

"He gave generously to the community in all sorts of ways," said Rexroad, also a former Woodland mayor.

Dudley Roy Holman was born in 1925 in San Jose, grew up in the Bay Area and graduated from Fremont High School. He attended San Jose State College before serving as a Navy gunnery officer in the Pacific during World War II.

He earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Stanford University in 1948. He met his wife of 59 years, the former Pat Walsh, while both were working in San Francisco. They had three children and moved in 1962 to Woodland, where he worked as an accountant for agricultural equipment manufacturers.

"He had no interest in sports or any other activity" in his spare time, Pulliam said. "He was always busy working with one group or another. He felt it was his civic duty to help improve the community with volunteer activities."

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