Former Caltrans Director Bill Dotson Dies at 94

by Hoa Quach on February 26, 2016

Former Caltrans District Director William “Bill” Dotson passed away at age 94, it was announced Friday.

Dotson served as the fourth District 11 Director for San Diego, Imperial and east Riverside counties from 1983-1988.

Much of the construction work under Dotson’s tenure covered rehabilitation and reconstruction of interchanges to bring them up to current design standards for the time. He focused on replacing highway lanes and adding shoulders.

Dotson was very proud to have worked on the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge. He was also involved in the planning stages for the Interstate 15 High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes.

Design on San Diego highways—interstates 5, 8 and State Route 163—took place under Dotson’s supervision. Construction on State Route 52 (SR-52) from the Interstate 805 separation to San Clemente Creek was completed in 1987. The portion of SR-52 from Convoy Street to Santo Road opened in May 1988. This new segment completed a 9-mile long link from Interstate 5 to Santo Road. That same month, construction began on the first of several projects totaling 18 miles to widen State Route 78 from four to six lanes between Oceanside and Escondido.

Caltrans District Director Laurie Berman said she had the pleasure to meet Mr. Dotson on a couple of occasions.

“We had a candid discussion about what he enjoyed about his tenure as District Director and what challenges he faced,” said Berman. “It was clear that he had very fond memories of his career here and was proud of the work he had done. I appreciate all that he did in the early years of District 11 to set us on a good course then and into the future.”

Dotson was born in Texas but had lived most of his life in southern California. He attended high school in Brawley, California in Imperial County and graduated from the California Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

He served as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy toward the end of World War and then began his 41-year career with the state of California in 1947 as a Junior Civil Engineer with the Division of Highways – now known as Caltrans.
Dotson received a degree from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1973. Advancements continued in following years through various assignments in District 11 including serving as Deputy District Director for Project Development and Principal Transportation Engineer.

Dotson is survived by his wife Dorothy and two grown children, Janet and James. Services have not yet been planned.