

As Don Zavattero – Tech Supply – remembers Tom Hanlon

Don and his brother Paul knew Tom Hanlon for many – many years. When Tom started his first store Don supplied him with the newest Phoenix balancer and all other equipment that Tom needed. Their cooperation and friendship grew over the years. They spent a lot of time together – Tom would pass by Don’s office – they would exchange ideas regarding sales opportunities and – of course - politics.

Tom – Don – and their wives often took vacations together, and they had a lot of fun. One time they went to Hawaii. The two of them –Don and Tom – wanted to go fishing, but they did not want to go on one of the tourist fishing boats... They wanted a boat of their own. They hired a fishing boat and set the date for the fishing adventure. And an adventure it was. It was an extremely stormy day – it was the worst weather in a long time. The two of them had to tie themselves to the ship-railing posts – they were 25 miles from the coast – and still hoped to catch a marlin or a tuna fish. They did not get one bite – and after 4 hours Tom and Don had had enough and shouted to the captain to return to shore. They had paid for an eight hour trip but were happy to land way ahead of the eight hours.

They made many trips together – and they always had a good time. As Don finally put it:” He was a good friend – a good customer – and honest as the day is long.” Don and his brother, Paul, went to visit with Tom just a week before he passed away and had a conversation that only close friends can have.

As David Redfern – formerly of Redwood General Tire – remembers Tom Hanlon.

“I first met Tom in 1959 when he delivered retreads to my Dad’s tire store in Redwood City. Tom worked for Davis & Myers. He would pick up and deliver retreads a couple of times a week. Some of our customers, who had bought premium tires (i.e. the General Dual 90), would want their own tires retreaded. We would install loaners on their cars - send their tires with Tom - and have them back - like new - in a couple of days.

In the 70’s Tom was working for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. He would, however, visit tire stores in the late afternoon or on Saturdays to buy casings, which he would sell to retreading companies. Often during his visits we would talk about the tire business – and he was always dreaming of having his own store. After many years he realized his dream and opened Hanlon’s Tire in San Bruno.

My favorite time with Tom was working with him in the Tire Dealers Association. In 1995 we had one of the best conventions the state association had ever had. Tom and Stephanie (the association’s executive director) worked really hard to put together a terrific program. The convention was at the “Nugget” in Sparks, Nevada. Tom’s entrance on “Bertha” – the elephant – was the highlight of the opening session. (See picture on page 2).

After I retired from Redwood General in 2002, Tom worked hard to keep me involved in the association’s activities. He took me on several trips to the Tracy landfills. We picked up used tires for his store and for resale to other dealers. We also went fishing on the San Joaquin delta and in the Sierras near Pine Mountain Lake. He actually took me to the Hetch Hetchy Dam – the source for water in the Bay Area.

Used tires were his reason to continue working and he loved meeting with his tire dealer friends on his routes. I think that in Tom’s version of heaven there is an unending supply of used tires - to sort – grade – and get ready to sell. So let’s all sell some used tires – then go fishing – in memory of Tom.”

Dave Redfern