

Angus Hugh Morrison

Resident of Fremont

Sep. 13, 1935 - Dec. 14, 2023



When interviewed recently for the USS Toledo Association Newsletter and asked what he'd like his legacy to be, Gus answered, "A project kid who helped build a great American city."

Gus Morrison served 27 years as a member of Fremont's City Council, 15 of those as Mayor. He served during a time of rapid growth in Fremont, when the city almost doubled in size, and during a time of remarkable demographic change, when a heavy influx of immigration led Fremont to become one of the most diverse cities in the country. He was dedicated to preserving and protecting Fremont's unique places, especially the hills and baylands, and to preserving the city's status as one of the best places in the country to raise a family. Before joining the council, he served on the Planning Commission and worked with a team to successfully petition for Fremont and Newark to be annexed to the AC Transit system. During his tenure with the city government, Fremont built the Fremont Main Library, Tri-City Animal Shelter, Redwood Lodge disabled housing project, and the award-winning Sunrise Village homeless shelter, which was

the first shelter in the nation built to accommodate families, established Ardenwood Historic Farm Park and the senior center at Central Park, and introduced curbside recycling and local household hazardous waste drop-off. Gus was particularly proud that in 1997 Fremont won the National Civic League's All America City Award, and in the early 2000's was named as the best city of its size in the country to raise children.

Gus represented Fremont in a variety of regional roles including 12 years on the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, almost 20 years on the Alameda County Waste Management Authority (chair twice,) the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (chair twice,) the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority, and the Alameda County Mayors Conference (president three times). He was a founding member of Tri-City Ecology, the Committee to Preserve the Hills, and the Citizen's Committee to Complete the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. He was one of the first men to join the League of Women Voters, and belonged to the National Organization for Women. Gus was elected by the Mayors of America to be a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Advisory Board, one of the two leadership bodies for the organization, and chaired the conference national standing committee on energy.

Gus grew up in Tonawanda, New York. He was the first of four children born to John Morrison, a seaman on the Great Lakes ore boats, and Mary (Norton) Morrison, a housekeeper, both immigrants from Scotland. He was raised in public housing on a lot that abutted a chemical plant, and looked after his younger siblings from an early age. At 17 he walked into a recruitment center and enlisted in the Navy, where he was trained as an electronic technician during the Korean War. He would go on to say, "Everything I am today can be traced directly to that day in 1953 when I joined the Navy at 17 years of age. Whenever someone says, 'Thank you for your service,' I respond with, 'Thank you for letting me serve.'" His Navy service ultimately brought him to San Francisco, where he met his wife Joy. Gus and Joy had three children and were married for 53 years, until her death in September 2012. Gus worked at Lockheed for 36 years, starting in 1958 as an Instrument Technician and working his way up to Manager of the Failure Analysis and Corrective Action Engineering Department. While working at Lockheed he earned a BA in History from San Jose State University. His pursuit of an MA in History was halted by his public service career.

Gus's commitment to public service didn't end when he left office. He brought his years of experience to bear helping new city councils learn to work together, served occasionally as a political consultant, and stayed in close touch with the many friends he made during his time in local government. He never stopped expressing his desire to make a difference in his community.

Gus died at home with loved ones close by on December 14, 2023. He is survived by his children, Frank Morrison, Gloria Ritchie, and Heather Meyer; his grandchildren, Meghan Ritchie, Garrett Ritchie, and Ainsley Meyer; and his great-grandson, Stanley Ritchie.

A service to honor Gus will be held at 4 pm on Tuesday, December 19th at Fremont Downtown Event Center, 3500 Capitol Ave Fremont, CA. Gus felt there were many unsung heroes in the community who made Fremont the very special place that it is, and a memorial is in the works to honor his legacy and the contributions of those who walked beside him. In lieu of flowers please consider supporting the memorial by making a donation to the Tri-City Ecology Center in memory of Gus, or do something of service to your local community.