



## [2017 Retiree Picnic: A Day of Fun and Fond Memories](#)

By Kim Hughes  
Photos by Art Mochizuki

As more than 640 attendees walked up to the registration table, a smiling Shirley Brown, president of the Employees Association, extended a hand and a warm welcome. It was the first Saturday in June, and this was the 2017 iteration of the annual LADWP Retiree Picnic at Whittier Downs Recreation Area.

Each year, retirees look forward to getting together to share fond memories and hug old friends. They come from around the corner and from thousands of miles away. Gathered in one place were hundreds of years of knowledge, experience and LADWP history. What a special treat to be in the presence of such a group!

### **Maurice Doucette**

Among the attendees was Maurice Doucette who had traveled the farthest—from New Orleans—to join the celebration.

### **Able Guarbiola**

Able Guarbiola was honored as the retiree with the most years of service. Guarbiola spent 48 years working in LADWP's Power System. He attended the picnic with his wife Dora, a retired employee of

Kaiser Permanente.

“I really can’t say enough about LADWP — the Department has been so good to me” - Able Guarbiola

Guarbiola said that he didn’t really want to retire in 2016, as he enjoyed every day of working as an assistant programmer. He came to LADWP when Sam Yorty was Mayor, and after serving in the U.S. Army and Navy. As Guarbiolo and Dora went off to enjoy the delicious luncheon of hot dogs, tri-tip, chicken, rolls, popcorn, soft drinks and ice cream, a familiar face approached. Former Chief Chemist Tim Hemmings was celebrating the day.

#### **Tim Hemmings**

Though retired, Hemmings is still well known around LADWP, as he serves on the Retirement Board and has been an active member of LADWP’s Regional Science Bowl since its inception, where he acts as chief science judge. Hemmings shared that he retired in 1999 and that this was his 18<sup>th</sup> Retiree Picnic.

At the photo booth, a line snaked from the shady tent, and friends and family were lined up to capture a memory. As attendees took their poses, their photos were snapped and printed out as keepsakes.

#### **Gene Conzano**

Gene Conzano, who retired in 2015, says that he misses his work friends. As LADWP’s dedicated photographer Art Mochizuki snapped photos of Gene, he commented how much he appreciated Art taking photos at his retirement event. Having those mementos means the world to Gene.

#### **Bobbie Ayears and Genevieve Kemp**

It is often said that LADWP is a “family affair,” and that was evident by the many related employees that were part of the Retiree Picnic celebration. A perfect example of that are Bobbie Ayears and Genevieve Kemp. Together, the aunt and her niece represented 45 years of service to LADWP.

## **Icle David**

Another special attendee was Icle David. At 97-years-young, David was the oldest retiree at the picnic. She joined LADWP in 1957, and shared that she had seen many changes during her time at the Department and beyond. She says that she has always been grateful for her job and the friends she made.

As the picnic was winding down and the final raffle prizes awarded, a shriek of glee could be heard as Anthony Reyes realized he was the winner of the Water and Power Credit Union's prize of a family four-pack of movie tickets. The day had produced a number of lucky raffle prize winners.

Soon, goodbye hugs were given all around, and people gathered their belongings for their trips home. It was bittersweet to many to say goodbye, but there is always next year's picnic.