

# Friends remember crash victim as GOP stalwart

## Death of former legislator Holman called 'huge loss'

By JULIE JANOVSKY  
TRIBUNE

Cal Holman was less than a minute away from his Scottsdale home when fate dealt him a tragic hand.

Holman, 76, a former state legislator and banker, was returning home from lunch early Friday afternoon heading south on Scottsdale Road. He was just two blocks from his central Scottsdale home that he shared with his wife, Elizabeth.

But he never made it back.

Police say Holman's white 1973 Camaro was struck by two cars speeding north on Scottsdale Road as Holman turned left onto Eastwood Lane.

"Elizabeth heard a loud crash," said family friend Gregg Rathborne of Surprise, recounting the story Elizabeth told him.

Rathborne said Elizabeth was worried that her husband wasn't back from lunch. So she leashed their dog and headed around the



Travis J. Aronica



Robert Van Brakel

corner to see what happened. Rathborne said before Elizabeth could reach the scene, neighbors stopped her, pulling her aside to say the wrecked car looked like her husband's white Camaro.

Police said Holman's Camaro was hit twice by two cars driving at speeds in excess of 70 mph. Robert H. Van Brakel, 42, of Phoenix and Travis J. Aronica, 25, of Michigan were later identified as drivers of the cars. The men were arrested after being treated for injuries from the crash.

"It's a huge loss," said Holman's friend and colleague, Royce Flora, chairman of Legislative District 8, who described Holman as a family man who was passionate about serving his community.

"He had two families," Flora



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COUPLE: Liz and Cal Holman of Scottsdale.

said. "His immediate family with Liz and his Republican family."

Holman's longtime dedication to public service is what his friends remembered most on Saturday as they struggled to cope with his sudden death.

Flora said he first met Holman in the 1980s when Holman was representing Paradise Valley in the Legislature. He said Holman was always the first to come forward to help fellow Republicans with their election

sort of clever tie. Usually ones with a Van Gogh design," remembered Flora, who added Holman remained active in the Republican Party until his death.

"He loved his Camaro," Flora said. "That was another of his trademarks."

Rathborne said Holman taught his son and daughter how to drive in the Camaro.

Holman and his wife also were familiar faces at the local Phoenix chapter of the Stanford University alumni association. Rathborne, who is on the alumni's board, said Holman received an MBA from Stanford in 1956 and earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard. Elizabeth graduated from Stanford in 1953.

"He was such a joy to work with," said Sharon Ewers, who knew Holman through alumni activities for the past 15 years. Ewers said Holman was their longtime treasurer and liked to plan events, particularly those at the Phoenix Art Museum.

"He's unforgettable," Ewers said. "He'll be sorely missed."

campaigns.

"Cal is one of those people who was always helping others," said Flora, who was aided by Holman in his run for the state House in 2004.

Flora said constituents couldn't miss Holman, who would often wear dress shorts and a short-sleeved shirt with a tie in the summer as he sought signatures for petitions or registered people to vote.

"He would always wear some

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