



Garden Grove Strawberry Festival Association

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <http://strawberryfestival.org/IM2008.html>

GRANDSON OF SILENT FILM STAR FRANCIS X. BUSHMAN – THE VERY FIRST GRAND MARSHAL OF THE 1959 GARDEN GROVE STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL PARADE -- WILL BE HONORED IN MAY 24, 2008 PARADE

GARDEN GROVE, CA (May 19, 2008) -- Francis X. Bushman, known in his day as the **“First Movie Idol”** and **“The King of Hollywood”** was the very first grand marshal in the first Garden Grove Strawberry Festival parade, held 49 year ago in 1959. The festival celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The first parade was held the second year.

Francis Xavier Bushman, who died in 1966 at the age of 83, is best remembered for his role as Messala in the original 1925 film version of "Ben-Hur" with Ramon Novarro who played Judah Ben-Hur. A body builder, Bushman was six feet tall and muscular. and towered over Novarro such that the crew had to dig a hole for him to stand in when the two were in scenes together. The most expensive silent film ever made, "Ben-Hur" cost 3.9 million dollars, a huge budget for that time. Bushman's role of Messala was later played by Stephen Boyd in a 1959 version.

This year the festival will honor Bushman's grandson, Michael Conway, who comes from an illustrious film heritage. Michael Conway was born in Hollywood, the son of the late Virginia Bushman and Jack Conway. Virginia Bushman was the daughter of Francis X. Bushman. Michael Conway's father, Jack Conway, was a director at Metro Goldwyn Mayer studios for 28 years where he directed over 30 films including the acclaimed "A Tale of Two Cities" plus many Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Carole Lombard and Jean Harlow films. He was an uncredited director of "A Star is Born" along with director William Wellman. A director from 1916 to 1948, Jack first began a career in the film industry as an actor in 1906.

Michael Conway spent his early years on a farm in Pacific Palisades. He graduated from Pomona College with a BA degree and later attended Stanford University Business School. He and his wife, Lynne, have been residents of Huntington Beach for over 40 years. They have two sons, John and David and two grandchildren, Heath and Bree, who will also be riding in the festival's 2008 parade, Saturday, May 24th. The parade which goes down Euclid Street in Garden Grove begins at 10 a.m.

For many years Michael was a contract administrator for airplane manufacturer Swedlow, Inc. An active member for many years of the Big Brothers organization, Michael has helped fatherless boys cope with life and has maintained contact with one of his little "brothers" for the past 40 years.

After retiring, Michael enjoyed sports, music, reading and singing. He has sung with master chorale groups in Los Angeles and Orange County and was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Westminster's choir for over 10 years.

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