

Mark A. Smith – 1927-2014

By Robert D. Dávila, Sacramento Bee

Mark A. Smith, a world-class adventurer and 4×4 motorsports pioneer who organized the first gathering of Jeep owners for an off-road trek along the torturous Rubicon Trail over the Sierra Nevada, died June 9 at 87.

The cause was a stroke, said Pearce Umlauf, vice president of Jeep Jamboree USA.



Mark A. Smith

Mr. Smith was a legendary outdoorsman who was widely credited with launching 4×4 off-roading as a sport more than 60 years ago and popularizing Jeeps as recreational vehicles. After settling in Georgetown in 1951, he worked with the local Rotary Club on a plan to bring visitors to the rugged El Dorado County community for an outing in Jeeps to boost the economy.

In 1953, he launched the Jeepers Jamboree, which drew more than four dozen 4×4 vehicles and 155 revelers for camping and driving along the Rubicon Trail, an old wagon route between Georgetown and Lake Tahoe. Today, the annual event draws enthusiasts from all over the world in Jeep Wranglers – and Jeep-like Toyota Cruisers and British Land Rovers – that crawl over granite slabs and boulders to Rubicon Springs.

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