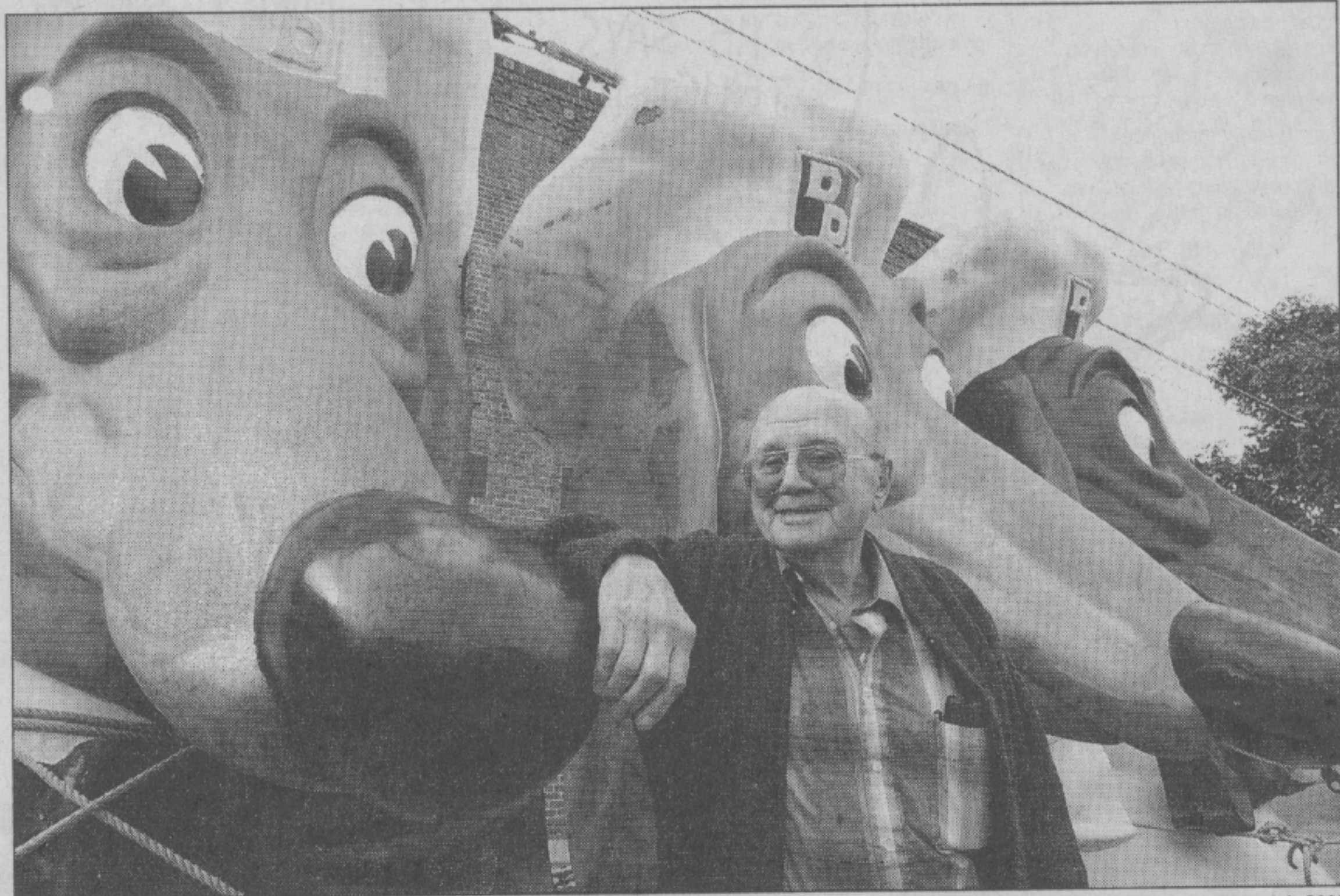


# OBITUARIES



PAUL CHINN / The Chronicle 2001

**Harold Sherwood Bachman** sketched the design for the giant rotating dachshund heads in 1965.

## Harold Bachman — designer of beloved Doggie Diner icon

By *Steve Rubenstein*  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Harold Sherwood Bachman, the man who designed the giant, grinning fiberglass Doggie Diner heads that became a beloved Bay Area icon as they twirled in the sky above a chain of now-defunct fast-food restaurants, has died.

Mr. Bachman, 84, died Saturday in a Santa Rosa hospital of a heart ailment.

"I had no idea this many people liked this stuff," Mr. Bachman said in a 2000 interview, during yet another save-the-doggie-head campaign. "I'm flabbergasted."

Mr. Bachman was a billboard and ad layout designer who, in 1965, sketched the design for the giant rotating dachshund heads that adorned the popular eateries. Mr. Bachman picked a dachshund because the menu featured "wiener dogs," he said.

"I just made the drawings," Mr. Bachman said. "Me, I had a malamute."

Mr. Bachman was a native of

Pittsburg and a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II. He attended art school in the late 1940s before starting his own design business out of his Berkeley garage, specializing in signs for grocery stores.

In later years, he designed billboards for banks and for beer and bread companies and a historical mural for the city of Stockton. He also worked as a graphic artist for Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

None of those campaigns captured the public's fancy like the brown dogs with long faces and blue bow ties that became the symbol of the 30 or so Doggie Diners. The chain's owner, Al Ross, commissioned Mr. Bachman to come up with a cute symbol, although the resplendent, renowned bow tie was reportedly dreamed up by Ross himself after Mr. Bachman submitted his sketches.

About a dozen of the heads still remain in private hands, along with a single well-preserved dog that stands on a San Francisco median strip of Sloat

Boulevard near Ocean Beach. That dog was installed at the site in January with the blessings of City Hall after a \$25,000 face-lift.

Another of the dogs was salvaged in the 1970s by Mr. Bachman himself, and he installed it in the bedroom of his young son, Will.

"It scared me sometimes," Will Bachman recalled. "I'd wake up in the middle of the night and see that thing staring at me from the corner of my bedroom. It could be frightening."

Mr. Bachman, an accomplished jazz guitarist, retired in 1986. He occasionally dined at Doggie Diners but preferred its pastrami sandwiches to its trademark hot dogs, according to his son.

He is survived by his children, William "Will" Bachman of Vacaville, Richard Bachman of Santa Rosa and Rebecca Bachman of Oroville. His wife, Mary, died in 1995.

A private memorial gathering will be held next month in Antioch.