



Artie and Evelyn Jett

They were transplanted Midwesterners with limited educations: Artie with only a 6th grade and Evelyn a high school graduate, yet they left a lasting Legacy in the East San Gabriel Valley.

Although both were born in St. Joseph, Missouri, Artie Jett didn't meet Evelyn Tuksbre until they both were living in Los Angeles. They met in the downtown Woolworth's, married in 1937 and moved to Baldwin Park about eight years later with their children, Richard and Virginia (youngest daughter Shirley was born several years later). Working side by side, the Jetts opened several grocery stores in the area, but by the late 1940s the stress of the seven-day-a-week job took its



toll on Artie's health. After surgery for an ulcer, he sold the stores and went into real estate at the suggestion of a friend.

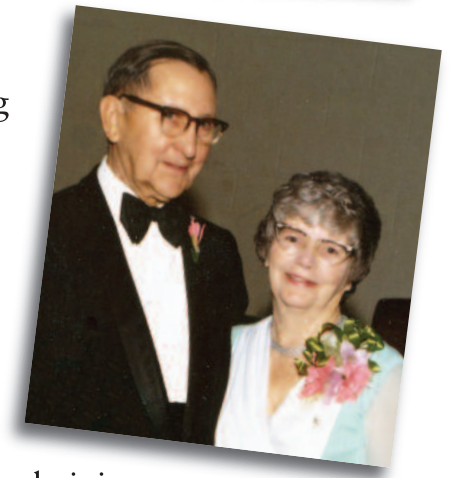
In 1950, he formed Toland-Jett Realty with business partner Pat Toland. They were responsible for the first commercial building in West Covina, if you don't count a few gas stations here and there. Situated where The Lakes business park is now, it was near a dirt road in those pre-freeway days and housed a doctor's office, an attorney and the realty itself. Toland-Jett Realty's location eventually grew into one of the East San Gabriel Valley's first strip centers. A few years later, Toland retired and the firm became Art Jett Realty.

Artie was deeply immersed in the community in other ways than business. At various times he served on the West Covina City Council, presided over the West Covina Lions Club and the city's Chamber of Commerce, sat on the Baldwin Park School Board, and was involved in the Covina Methodist Church. In addition, he was a Mason and Shriner. His and Evelyn's philanthropic interests included Queen of the Valley Hospital, a tradition carried on today by their son Richard, who has likewise been active in local civics.

Evelyn was as involved with the realty as she had been with the grocery stores, making the agency's most lucrative sale and helping the first Chinese couple in the then heavily segregated area purchase their new home in West Covina. To ensure that they would be welcome she went door to door talking to their prospective neighbors. She was active in her children's lives, serving as president of their PTAs throughout the years, and was a high-ranking member of Eastern Star, Job's Daughters and De Molay.

After retiring, Artie continued to dabble in real estate. His ventures included the purchase of a 20-acre cabbage field that he soon sold half of, paying off the remainder with the proceeds. His 10 acres eventually became the home of the West Covina Civic Center.

Artie and Evelyn each passed away at Citrus Valley Hospice in Covina, he at age 94 and she at 87, leaving three children and six grandchildren deeply imbued with the same sense of integrity that they brought to everything they did.



Living
Legacy

FAMILY SHOWCASE PROGRAM

