

The Joseph W. Aidlin Memorial Park

by Susan Fox Hodgson

About 15 people gathered on May 20 to dedicate the Joseph W. Aidlin Memorial Park, located in the heart of The Geysers Geothermal Field.

At a brief ceremony, four people spoke of Joe and his work. Calpine's Vice President Geothermal Region, Mike Rogers, said The Geysers is what it is, because of Joe Aidlin's tenacity. Kevin Talkington, Calpine Land Manager, said every geothermal lease in California is based on leases Joe devised for The Geysers. Marilyn Nemzer, Executive Director of the Geothermal Education Office, called Joe a clever, enthusiastic, and visionary lawyer—committed to geothermal as an industry and to social justice. And I mentioned how much of Joe's life work arose from his love of the land—for he called himself "first of all" a frustrated farmer.

Like Joe, the wooded area chosen for his memorial park has a history. The Southern Pomo

Aidlin Memorial Park

and Western Wappo Indians called it home for around 12,000 years. Big Sulphur Creek Road, curving around it, was traveled by thousands of tourists headed to the Geysers Resort Hotel—located near Calpine’s present southern entrance.

Karen Pettigrew, who grew up in this hotel about 100 years later, attended the dedication. She had played in the memorial park area as a child

and recognized the apple tree still blooming—as would have her mother, Barbara Curry Pedersen, who also holds fond memories of The Geysers.

And right under the memorial park—beneath the oak trees, the apple tree, and the picnic tables—lies one of the world’s most famous geothermal reservoirs, filled with the steam Joe harnessed to generate electricity. Every molecule and megawatt gave him satisfaction.

In many ways, Joe helped create the modern geothermal industry—and the Joseph W. Aidlin Memorial Park is a fitting monument to the life of this remarkable man. ■

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— Kevin Talkington, Calpine Land Manager



After the ceremony, attendees stand around the dedicatory sign marking the Joseph W. Aidlin Memorial Park. PHOTO BY T. GLADSON, GRC.