



**NEVADA
COUNTY**
CALIFORNIA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Lisa Swarhout

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BOARD AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: June 2, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lisa Swarhout, District 3

SUBJECT: Certificate of Recognition for David Comstock for his decades of work preserving the intricate history of Nevada County through his art and publications.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Certificate of Recognition.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: David “Dave” Comstock was born in 1927 where he lived in a home full of books and grew up as a voracious reader. He later took a position at the University of California Press as a book designer and eventually became project manager. He worked closely with authors, augmenting some work with his own watercolor illustrations.

Dave then came to Nevada County and married Ardis Hatten in the 1960s. They purchased land in the Chalk Bluff area and it was there, in a hand-built home, that he began Comstock Bonanza Press in 1979. He greatly enjoyed the freedom of choosing which authors with whom he would work. He once stated that his greatest accomplishment in life was running a publishing business for over 40 years without ‘going broke.’ Over that span, Dave published more than 50 books offering a unique perspective on the history of the Sierra and California.

Dave was a longtime member of both the Nevada County Historical Society and the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission, where he compiled and published the Commission’s guide to the County’s historical landmarks, *Exploring Nevada County*. Throughout his career, Dave helped numerous writers and organizations, including churches and civic groups, to self-publish. He added a professional touch, offering enhanced appeal and expanded readership, at nominal fees or no charge at all. In one of his later publications, he published a rare account of history as told by Nisenan voices.

In addition to his historical contributions and those in the world of publication, Dave was an accomplished artist who created over 200 watercolors and illustrations, including many regional scenes. He also designed a Gold Rush postage stamp, which is now displayed in the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.

In 2013, Dave left Nevada County to be closer to family. However, he continued to work on several historical projects for years. Some of his work can be viewed at the Searls Historical Library in Nevada City in their David A. Comstock Collection. Dave died in 2025, but his contributions as a publisher, historian, and artist will continue as his legacy.

Therefore, I request that the Board of Supervisors approve the attached Certificate of Recognition to honor David Comstock's dedication to our local history and incredible contributions to the community through both his art and publications.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Lisa Swarhout
District 3