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Russell Johnson



July 2, 1919 - December 12, 2019 Resident of Lafayette

Russell Johnson peacefully left this world at 100 years old.

Born in Idaho Falls, he was the descendant of Swedish immigrants. The family moved to Berkeley, where Russ graduated from Berkeley High School.

Russ was a lifelong tennis player. He attended UC Berkeley, majoring in Economics, then went to work for IBM. When World War II came along, Russ enlisted in the US Army, and saw combat in Germany, attaining the rank of Master Sergeant. When the war ended, he attended the University of Dijon and studied French.

Returning to the States he was rehired by IBM and worked in Oakland and San Francisco as a salesman. There he met Betty Thompson, a fellow IBM employee, whom he married in 1947. Russ had a successful career with IBM, always making quota, selling large computer installations to the Federal Government, the US Military, the Post Office, and Ames Research Center in Sunnyvale. Russ, along with his family, was sent by IBM to cities around the country and around the world, each move a promotion: Phoenix, Washington DC, Germany, Denver, Tacoma, New Zealand, and finally back to the Bay Area, settling in Lafayette in 1966. Both Russ and Betty were

faithful members of St. Anselm's Episcopal Church in Lafayette until the end of their lives.

Russ became President of the Lafayette-Langeac Society. Langeac, France is the sister city of Lafayette and home of the Marquis de Lafayette, American Revolutionary hero. Russ and Betty also supported the successful effort to erect the statue of the Marquis in Lafayette Town Square, and the construction of a city Petanque court for the French bowling sport.

After retiring from IBM, Russ and Betty travelled extensively, with hiking tours in France, a house exchange in Paris, and several cruises. Betty was a gourmet cook, and Russ created a beautiful garden that he tended passionately. Betty and Russ entertained frequently at their comfortable and elegant Lafayette home. After Betty's death in 2010, Russ wrote his autobiography, "My Life with Betty." Two years later, Russ moved to Piedmont Gardens senior community. There he met Amity Buxton, with whom he travelled to Paris at age 95.

Russ is survived by his daughter Janet Brown of Derwood, MD, and son Christopher Johnson of Pleasant Hill, CA, as well as four grandsons and four great-grandchildren.

Russell Johnson had a phenomenal memory for past events and a terrific sense of humor. He was an engaging storyteller, an affable companion and friend to many, with an easy smile and charismatic and graceful manner. Russ retained relatively good health, a razor sharp mind and superb hearing to the end of his life: a life full of success and good fortune. Lucky in love, skillful in business, blessed with the love of his family and friends.

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[back](#)

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