

THE DAILY JOURNAL

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Millbrae, California



Bernard E. (Bernie) Esser, Jr. passed away peacefully on 23 June 2013 at his home in Millbrae, California, surrounded by his family and his baseball books. He was born in San Francisco on 27 December 1930, to Bernard E. Esser and Gertrude Esser. A proud San Franciscan, Bernie was a baseball and basketball star at Lincoln High School, and a member of Lincoln's Athletic Hall of Fame. After Lincoln, he attended the University of San Francisco on a basketball scholarship, graduating in 1951. Bernie then proudly served as a lieutenant in the US Army in Korea for two years.

Bernie married his high school sweetheart, Elizabeth Ann (Elledge) in San Francisco on 27 June 1952. They had three children - sons Brooks (Stacey) and Brandt (Linda), and daughter Barrie (Kevin).

After his Army service, Bernie began a successful career at Lockheed Missiles and Space Company in Sunnyvale, California. He rose to the rank of Vice President of Operations, Missile Systems Division over the course of a 37-year career, before retiring in 1994. Bernie was well-liked and respected by all those who knew him. His legacy there was that he treated everyone with dignity and respect and was often found where he was more comfortable, out on the shop floor. The highlight of his career was the 2 years in Charleston, South Carolina as Resident Manager of Lockheed Missiles and Space Company at the Polaris Missile Facility, Atlantic.

Bernie was also actively involved in local government in Millbrae, serving on the Parks and Recreation commission, before joining the City Council in 1964. He remained on the council for a total of 14 years, and served three terms as the city's mayor.

Bernie enjoyed spending time at his cabin in Lake Tahoe fishing, boating, and teaching anyone who was willing, how to water-ski. In later years, he spent a great deal of time with his family on a small ranch in Sonoma County. He particularly enjoyed the Christmas season when the entire family would gather. Bernie was a very giving person and always made sure that his kids and their families had what they needed. He was generous, thoughtful and considerate - a true gentleman in every respect. He was always upbeat and positive and had great advice for anyone who asked for it. When asked how he was doing, he almost always responded "terrific"!

Besides his family and his work, Bernie's great passion was baseball. He attended hundreds of Giants games over the years, but his interest went far beyond that of the casual fan. He devoted many hours to the Society of American Baseball research, helping to compile a database of baseball statistics going back over 100 years. He also amassed a large library of baseball books. He took particular delight in meeting with baseball old-timers, listening to their stories, and getting his books signed. He considered many baseball legends his friends.

Bernie held many titles in his life; however the one that he liked best was that of 'Gramps'. His grandchildren, Brett Esser, Kacey Snodgrass, and Corey Snodgrass were his great joy in retirement, and he delighted in their accomplishments. He will leave a huge void in his family's lives and they will miss him dearly but his positive spirit will live with them forever. Bernie is also survived by his brother Albert (Chris) and their children Craig, Leslie and Kristen.

There will be a private family service. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in Bernie's name to Mission Hospice and Home Care, 1670 S. Amphlett Blvd., Suite 300, San Mateo, CA 94402.