

JAMES DONALD BRUNK



James Donald (Don) Brunk died peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday, November 5, 2019, at his home in Jackson, Wyoming. He was 91 years old. Known for his humility, kindness and wisdom, Don was beloved as a leader, friend and father.

Born in Berkeley, California on April 30, 1928 to parents Benjamin Franklin and Esther Norton Brunk, he grew up in the Bay area. Don graduated from Berkeley High School and later UC Berkeley, where he was a member of Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity and played on the Cal Bears golf team. Don joined the Navy after college and, as an Ensign, served as a Patrol Plane Commander.

On August 31, 1952, he married Joyce (Jo) Jaeger in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. After leaving the Navy, Don moved with Jo to Thermopolis, WY in 1955 where he flew as a pilot for the Empire State Oil Company, and eventually moved up the ranks to Vice President. In 1965 Don was elected to serve two terms on the Wyoming State Senate for Hot Springs

County. Don was also the founder and developer of the Legion Town and Country Club in Thermopolis.

In 1970, Don was appointed by Governor Stan Hathaway to serve as the Executive Director of the Wyoming Department of Economic Planning and Development. He then moved with his wife and five sons to Cheyenne where they lived for four years. From 1973 – 1978 Don also served on the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

Don and Jo purchased the 95 Ranch in Jackson Hole in 1965, and permanently settled there in 1974. They restored three historic log cabins on the property, which they then used as places of retreat for pastors and missionaries. Don and Jo were deeply involved in mentoring countless young people, many of whom lived on the ranch with them for periods of time.

Faith in Jesus Christ was a profound anchor in Don's life. He and Jo attended First Baptist Church of Jackson Hole for many years, and were heavily involved in the founding and building of the Jackson Hole Christian Center, where he served as Senior Pastor for several years in the mid 1980's. More recently Don and his wife were active in a lively home church fellowship.

Don is preceded in death by his wife, Joyce (August 22, 2019,) son James Donald Brunk, Jr. (January 6, 2016,) son David Cameron Brunk (May 6, 2015,) and parents Benjamin and Esther Brunk.

He is survived by his brother, Benjamin Franklin (Frank) Brunk, Jr., son Paul Curtis Brunk (Julie,) son Thomas Randall Brunk (Nancy,) son William Franklin Brunk (Patricia,) daughter in law Jan Brunk, daughter in law Janis Brunk, 14 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

There will be a Celebration Memorial Service on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 3:00 pm at his ranch, 10505 Fern Ln., Moose WY 83001. Reception to follow.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to the First Baptist Mission Fund.