



Bruce L. Giffen

May 26, 1915 - March 5, 2015

Beloved father to Carolyn Stewart, William Oakley, Bentley Giffen, and Allison Wells, died peacefully on March 5, 2015. Bruce was a Santa Barbara resident for most of the last 68 years. Born to Grace and Bruce Giffen in St. Clairesville, Ohio on May 26, 1915, Bruce grew up with three siblings in Escondido, CA. He graduated Whittier College as an accredited YMCA Director and worked for several Armed Services YMCAs in CA and WA. At the outset of WWII, Bruce opened a USO Club in Port Townsend, WA before working with desert troops in training for North Africa in Banning, CA. During his four-year stint in the Navy, he served as a communication officer on Admiral Nimitz's staff in Pearl Harbor. Bruce married Elaine Walters Oakley of Santa Barbara in 1948, with whom he enjoyed 35 happy years. For ten years, he was the manager of MacRostie Brothers before returning to executive positions in YMCA's. Bruce was the first director of the Montecito YMCA. Later, he was Director of all Tulare County YMCAs, and then he was Director of the large residential YMCA in Long Beach. After YMCA retirement, he worked for 15 years with NY Life. Bruce and Elaine built a cadre of good friends and participated in many local organizations. Bruce served as Kiwanis Club President, worked at many a pancake breakfast, and was deacon and choir member in the First Christian Church. He and Elaine attended many baseball games played by his son and grandchildren. He regularly watched sports events on TV and he lunched out with his granddaughters or invited them to share his home. Bruce had a big warm smile. After Elaine's death in

1984, he was amazingly independent, kept meticulous records, enjoyed driving, and donated generously. He loved peanut butter, cheese, radishes, ice cream, and chocolate covered cherries. In later years, Bruce served on the resident's board at Val Verde, and for ten years, he planned and led a weekly church service at Villa Alamar Alzheimer Facility. He was a mentor to many New Life Church members, many of whom, like Pastor Robb, became virtual family. Several remained heart-close friends/visitors, even as his health declined." Gramps" was a kind, gentle man, greatly loved by eleven grandchildren (Adele Luttrell, Allison Arellanes, Stephanie Forrester, Steve Giffen, Bruce Stewart, William Oakley, Susie Van Der Kooji, Cheryl Hess, Stacy Ferris, Austin Wells, and Hilary Wells). He is also survived by 19 great grandchildren, 2 great great grandchildren, as well as two loving nephews, Charles Eckert III and Richard Eckert. A service will be held at 3 PM on March 22nd, at New Life Church, 50 E. Alamar, Santa Barbara. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in honor of Bruce to New Life Church or to Villa Alamar Alzheimer Facility, at same address.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR **22**. 3:00 PM (PT)

New Life Church
50 E. Alamar St.
Santa Barbara, CA