



## Dean Robert Brunner

September 15, 1945 - August 27, 2018

Dean Robert Brunner was born September 15, 1945 in San Diego, CA. He attended local elementary schools and graduated from Mount Miguel High School in 1963. His college days were spent at Biola University in La Mirada, CA where he graduated in 1968 with a degree in Christian Education.

During his last semester of Biola, he met his future wife, Penny Gates. They were married in August of 1968 and began their 50 year journey together by moving to Portland, Oregon, where Dean attended Western Conservative Baptist Seminary for two years.

While in school, he learned from a dear friend, how to paint houses, which became his first career. It was in Portland that the first of his seven children was born, his very capable daughter, Jami.

Dean and Penny moved from Portland to Isla Vista, CA in June of 1970 to pursue a dream of finding an expression of the early church. This was a goal that led him and his family in 1987 to become a part of the Antiochian Eastern Orthodox Church along with 2000 other Christians from all over the US. Dean's heart, soul and spirit were always about his Christian life, and the roots that the family put down in Isla Vista were very significant especially in regards to the church.

Together, Dean and Penny had six more children, four sons and two more daughters. He was a very giving father, who took interest in his children beyond what many fathers would do. Dean coached every one of his children in almost every sport, i.e. soccer, football, baseball, basketball and softball and also taught every one of them to paint! His family was his focus, he was proud of his children and their accomplishments and he could never spend enough time being engaged with them while always modeling an incredible work ethic.

Dean was a man of many talents. He could do almost anything! He could fix anything you put in front of him. Just before the birth of his 6th child, he ripped the roof off of his small Isla Vista duplex and proceeded to add a second story that was larger than the first story, to accommodate his growing tribe. Good thing, because 2 years later the seventh and last child arrived, completing the Brunner 7, and there was enough space for all!

When the 80's arrived, Dean began a second career. He began buying property in Isla Vista and took on the name of landlord, renting to over 200 students every year. He was very proud of his properties and employed many people to keep them in the best of shape. In the 80's, 90's and the early 2000's Dean grew his business by adding properties in Paso Robles, Thousand Oaks, Las Vegas and Hollywood. He was also one of the four men who began Holdren's restaurant here in Santa Barbara. Around this same time, he joined the board of Project Mexico, and St Innocent Orphanage in Rosarito, Mexico. Shortly thereafter, he became one of the founding board members of St. Katherine University in San Marcos, CA. He was passionate about both positions and served both until his health declined to the point that it was impossible for him to continue.

In Isla Vista, Goleta and Santa Barbara, Dean wore many hats. He was involved in: Goleta Boys and Girls Clubs, Dos Pueblos Little League, Goleta

Valley Girls Softball Association, Santa Barbara YFL, Dos Pueblos High School athletics, Isla Vista Property Owners Association, and Santa Barbara Rental Property Association to name a few. He was a founding member of Goleta Youth Basketball Association (GYBA) and the Page Youth Center. Dean served his community faithfully, making many lifelong friends along the way.

In 2011, Dean was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment which later progressed to Lewy Body Dementia causing a decline both physically and mentally. Ultimately, he had a stroke in August of 2015 which led to his final demise. Dean had been at home with a group of loving and dedicated caregivers for the past three years and until his passing on August 27th, 2018. These amazing and selfless people, who attended him so well right up to the very end, are: Angelica Chavez, Katya Herrera, Maria Valladares, Jorge Leon and Marc Hawkins.

Dean leaves behind his wife of 50 years, Penny, his children, Jami, (Stoney) Zac, Tawnia, (Keith), Justin, Beau (Leticia) and Tiffany (Jamie), 20 Grandchildren, 8 Great Grandchildren, many nieces and nephews and his 3 Godchildren.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Bob and Fritz Brunner, his sister, Carol Simonsen, his beloved son, Cyrus, and his precious granddaughter, Analicia.

May his memory be eternal.

Trisagion Prayer Service will be Tuesday, September 4th at 7 PM. The Orthodox Funeral Service will be at 11 AM on Wednesday, September 5th, both at St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, 300 Sumida Gardens Lane, Goleta,

CA. Burial will follow at the Goleta Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the St. Athanasius building fund in memory of Dean Brunner.

# Cemetery Details

## **Goleta Cemetery**

44 South San Antonio Road  
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93110  
(805) 967-3608