



Ernest Clell Pratt

March 25, 1925 - February 12, 2022

Ernie Pratt was born to Minnie Alice (Bair) and Donald Cole Pratt in Soldier Kentucky on March 25, 1925. The family moved to Detroit Michigan while he was in grade school. After graduating high school in 1943 he joined the Army Air Corp where he became addicted to black coffee but also became a gunner on a B-17 stationed in Italy and found himself a crewmember on the last European bombing mission of the war on April 25th, 1945. While awaiting discharge from the Air Corp he met Louise Plummer at the Army air base in Santa Ana, California. In September Louise accompanied him upon his return to Detroit and they were married on May 17, 1946. Having had enough of Detroit winters they moved to the Los Angeles area in 1948 where he became a surveyor for the Southern California Gas Company. Ernie's first son David was born in 1949 and a daughter Valerie followed in 1951 with another son Mark arriving in 1954. Suffering terribly from allergies to the suffocating smog enveloping Los Angeles he finally couldn't take it anymore, and in March of 1956 loaded his possessions into a trailer and drove the family to Portland Oregon for a fresh start. Initially he worked for the Portland Gas & Coke Company, but soon became employed as a draftsman by Portland General Electric. Near the end of 1963 Ernie was enticed by an offer from Louise's aunt Virginia to manage Gold Hill Builder's Supply owned by her and located in southern Oregon, so the family moved to Gold Hill. It didn't take long for him to figure out the supply company was a scam after which he became employed by Southern Oregon Title Company. Then, as happens in many

marriages, things fell apart and he and Louise divorced in the summer of 1965. By the end of the year he had moved to Santa Barbara where his (also now divorced) mother owned a house with a rental duplex next door. After a short stint as a draftsman at the Homestake Oil Company he became employed by the City of Santa Barbara as a title search specialist. In 1966 while playing the part of a sailor in the production of South Pacific put on by the Alhecama Players he met Sheila Cruickshank. One thing led to another and they were wed on May 27th, 1967. In the meantime Ernie had moved over to the County of Santa Barbara as a Real Property Agent. He and Sheila settled into the house on the Mesa that she and her mother had purchased in 1952. He subsequently spent many years enjoying the good life drinking endless cups of coffee with his numerous friends and as an active member of the First Congregational Church of Santa Barbara. Ernie retired from the County of Santa Barbara in the early '90s and Sheila retired from her Administrative Assistant position at UCSB soon after. Sheila passed away at the age of 83 in 2010 leaving Ernie and his beloved cat Jimmi to hold down the fort, which he did until passing away at home on February 12, 2022 at the age of 96. Interred alongside Shelia in the Montecito Urn Garden at the Santa Barbara Cemetery on Channel Drive, he requests that anyone visiting his gravesite not bring flowers but rather a cup of coffee.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108
(805) 969-3231

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

VD

“ I met Ernie Pratt in 1960 when we both worked at PGE in Portland, Oregon. Our families met and soon we were all good friends. Picnics, dinners, sharing cups of coffee together.

Ernie was one of the kindest men I have known. He was a really good father to his children and made time to spend with each one, often taking them to the Portland Library on weekends. They grew up to be wonderful adults, each one special in their own way.

His wife Louise became my best friend. I still miss her and will miss hearing Ernie's kind voice.

I am so glad that he found Sheila in Santa Barbara and they had their time together. They were so well suited to each other. Louise had so many good things to say about Sheila. I remember when Ernie and Sheila took a cross-country camping trip and stopped in Sedona to visit with me It was such a pleasure to be with them.

May my dearest friend, Ernest Clell Pratt rest in peace. Love,
Valerie DeVore

Valerie DeVore - March 26, 2022 at 05:24 PM

PA

“ Bill and I have loved Ernie and Sheila Pratt for many years. We enjoyed spending time together and even traveling together. Bill and Ernie loved to work on projects together for the church or other people. I remember the fun they had building an elegant playhouse for a preschool family I knew --and those children loved that their playhouse looked just like their real home. Ernie built a huge palace for Melissa's bunny Cocoa.

Our daughters loved Ernie too. They have both benefitted from his generous spirit with the gifts of stained glass materials and his clarinet. I can picture Bill, and now Ernie, driving around heaven fixing things for the people God and the people there.

Peggy Alexander - March 04, 2022 at 05:35 PM

MP

“ I will always remember Sheila Pratt when I remember Ernie. That's because he always reminded the church to remember Sheila whenever he prayed during services. Just that simple action reveals so much of Ernie's character! He was beloved at First Congregational Church.

Martha Peyton - March 01, 2022 at 01:14 PM

SK

“ Before the pandemic, when there was coffee fellowship after the service at First Congregational Church, Ernie was one of my favorite people with whom to chat. I knew that he had served in the military and yet he was interested to learn that my Dad joined the Civilian Conservation Corp during WWII. It's so awesome to learn that Ernie taught his kids how to split wood, as my Dad taught me the same thing. Ernie kept telling Dennis, our pastor, to tell everyone at FCC that he loves them. Ernie's spirit is strong and I can still feel his love. He has joined his beloved wife Sheila in heaven, and now Ernie can split wood for the other angels.



Sue Lael Katnic - February 28, 2022 at 12:01 PM

DA

“ As interim pastor at First Congregational Church these last couple years, my time with this endearing gem of a human being have been special, however limited. He is dear to my heart and to long-time friends at First Congregational--bad jokes notwithstanding.

Dennis Alger - February 26, 2022 at 06:16 PM

VJ

“ Heartfelt thanks to my dear Dad for our rural Oregon childhood!

The folks were poor, but young enough to enjoy the "pioneer life" on 80 acres of hillside forest and meadow just west of Portland, with a small stream, an old corduroy logging road, two orchards, a garden, big old wooden barn, and of course an orange cat!

"Cinnabar" and us three free-range children certainly maximized our independence on those acres.

Dad built us swings and sleds and stilts and even an iron-wheeled locomotive playhouse.

He also built us a "bus shack" by the side of the road to keep us dry while awaiting the school bus.

But it was no shack.

It had windows, a bench, and the outside was completely clad in cedar shakes that he split by hand, teaching us kids to split cedar with a froe. That little shelter was still standing intact 50 years later.

Of all the self-sufficiency skills Dad taught us, I am most proud of my vicious overhand ax swing, and to this day still enjoy splitting wood as much as he did.

I will always be grateful for my remarkable childhood, Dad.

And I'll love and miss you all my life.



Valerie Pratt Jaspersen - February 22, 2022 at 12:43 AM

DA

“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Dave - February 18, 2022 at 02:31 PM

DA

“ Although Marion and I had to leave town in 1995 I am so glad my dad got to spend the rest of his life in beautiful Santa Barbara surrounded and supported by his many friends and neighbors. After Sheila passed in 2010 Marion and I drove down from Oregon nearly every March to celebrate Dad's birthday. Each day we were there we had breakfast with him on the patio at the Breakwater restaurant, a memory I will always treasure. I would also like to mention how proud I am of his service in the Army Air Corp in WWII. I am including a photo of Dad and his air crew in front of his B-17 (he is in the back row, third from right). May you rest in peace, with all our love, Dave and Marion

Dave - February 18, 2022 at 02:27 PM

DP

“ Dave & Marion Pratt lit a candle in memory of Ernest Clell Pratt



Dave & Marion Pratt - February 18, 2022 at 02:26 PM