



George Rybnicek

September 11, 1925 - July 21, 2023

George Rybnicek 9/11/1925-7/21/2023 George Rybnicek, a.k.a. George Brooks, left his body peacefully at his Santa Barbara home on Friday, July 21, 2023 at the age of 97. George was a master jeweler and craftsman and a key figure in the modernist jewelry movement of the 50s and 60s, owning a successful jewelry business in Santa Barbara for over 30 years. Born in Brno, Czech Republic, George was 6 years old when he and his family immigrated to Montreal, Canada. From an early age, he took an interest in beautiful things such as butterflies, rocks and shells. In his teens, George began hammering jewelry from silver coins, which led to a job as a jeweler's apprentice working alongside European jewelers and top designers of the time. Over several years, he worked his way up to becoming a master silversmith, goldsmith and platinumsmith, opening his first store in Montreal in 1957. Soon after meeting his beloved wife, Jean, the two took their accrued savings and traveled around the world for a year, to such exotic places as Sri Lanka, Tahiti and Australia, where they married. They returned in 1962, settling in Santa Barbara for the good weather and natural beauty. After opening his second Jewelry store, George Brooks Jeweler in Santa Barbara's El Paseo, George and Jean bought some land, built a house and started a family. Subsequently, George moved his store to Montecito, continuing the business for over 25 years before retiring in 1991. His work has been accepted into many permanent museum collections around the world, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Smithsonian Institute's Renwick Gallery in

Washington D.C. George was a reserved and loving husband and father, who had a passion for gardening, snorkeling, fishing, opals, shells, reading and an evening rum and coke. There seemed to be nothing he wasn't capable of, and he enjoyed teaching others and passing on what he knew. George is survived by his wife of 62 years, Jean Rybnicek, his son and daughter, Kimon and Martana Rybnicek, and five grandchildren. His presence will be deeply missed.