



H. Hampton Bell

April 24, 1924 - January 12, 2021

"H. Hampton Bell, a long time resident of Montecito, CA, passed away on 1/12/21, at the age of 96 years. He was a beloved son, husband, father, brother, uncle and friend.

He was born in New Jersey to John and Miriam Bell, the middle child between his brother John, Jr. and sister Miriam. His father was a WWI veteran who used his war bonus to take his children on a trip to Norfolk, VA. There Hampton was able to see the new aircraft carrier USS Lexington, of future WWII fame.

His father was able to keep working during the Depression and Hampton always said they were thankful for having enough, even if it was a simple life. World War II interrupted Hampton's studies at Rutgers University when he was drafted into the Army where he was initially trained as a meteorological assistant. He was one of the first people to ever drive to Alaska, where he served the rest of the War in the Aleutian Islands, having finally been trained to work as an Air Traffic Controller and rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant.

After the War, he used his GI Bill to return to Rutgers and earn a B.S. degree in Agriculture. After graduating and securing work with the Farm Bureau in Bucks County, PA, he was contacted and invited by his mother's long time pen pal, to have a home cooked meal. The pen pal had worked as a nurse for the

Aspden family, and introduced Hampton to them. That is how he met the great love of his life, Mary Ellen Aspden. They were married a few months later, settling in Carversville, PA, where they set up a modernized chicken farm. Their eggs were of such high quality that the former Vice President Henry Wallace contracted with Hampton to supply eggs for Mr. Wallace's vaccination manufacturing business. Hampton and Mary Ellen adopted many cutting edge techniques that used new electrically powered devices, and they were featured in a regional periodical as a result.

They soon thereafter welcomed their sons Tommie and Bruce to the family, although Tommie did not survive infancy. As a child, Bruce was watched over by the champion Rough Collies that Mary Ellen raised and showed. Hampton and Mary Ellen moved to Asheville, North Carolina where Hampton was soon invited to become a partner in opening a retail and landscaping nursery. After retiring from his second successful business, the Bell family moved to Montecito, CA in 1975 for Bruce's health and to allow Mary Ellen to more easily show her Rough Collies, which she did with great success.

Hampton's love of horticulture led him to develop and maintain a fruit tree orchard, build a greenhouse for his many varieties of orchids, and landscape beautiful gardens on their 1.5 acre property. He also enjoyed jogging and tennis. In his 70's, he transitioned to riding a bicycle and actively maintained his health. He co-authored a book of poetry with his sister Miriam and published another of his own. He was a docent for many years at the Lotusland gardens. He was instrumental in revitalizing The Garden Club in Montecito, where he organized a scholarship for the Horticultural Department at Santa Barbara City College that continues to this day.

Hampton was a gentleman by every sense of the word. He was kind and loving to everyone he met; welcoming family, friends, gardeners, and caregivers into his circle of loved ones. He enjoyed time spent in conversation

and laughter, was generous & giving, and valued the simpler things in life.

He held court every Saturday at the Summerland Beach Cafe, where he had the high honor of once being served ice cream, a rare off-off menu item. A picture of Banny, their last dog, a Bichon Frise hangs there today, next to many famous celebrity visitors. Hampton stayed mentally active into his 90's, accompanying school children to view aircraft of WWII where he spoke to them of his experiences in the War, and of his times seeing Civil War veterans, Winston Churchill outside #10, and visiting China and the Soviet Union. Keeping up with the latest trends, Hampton even took a ride in a self-driving Model X! His active spirit kept him vibrant. After several years of tender caregiving, he passed away on 13 Jan 2021. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

He was predeceased by Mary Ellen, Tommie, and Bruce, and is survived by Miriam (Bell) Waterhouse and nephews of both the Bell and Aspden families.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests
donations be sent to the Scholarship Fund c/o:
Santa Barbara Garden Club
PO Box 91432
Santa Barbara CA 93190

Cemetery Details

West Laurel Hill Cemetery

215 Belmont Ave.
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall



“ *Hampton, I was blessed to know you & the garden club was blessed to have you. Thank you for everything. Goodnight old friend. Lisa*

Lisa L - February 22, 2021 at 02:14 PM