



## Robert Warren Birnie

April 22, 1926 - June 6, 2012

Robert Warren Birnie was born in Los Angeles, California on April 22, 1926. He passed away on May 17, 2012 after a brave battle with cancer. "Yukon Bob," was accomplished, adventurous and led an inspirational life. He was strong, loving, industrious, funny, and remarkably independent. After graduating from Fairfax High School, he served in WWII in the Army Air Force. After the war, he survived a plane crash in the Mojave Desert and hiked 40 miles in two days to get help to rescue the pilot (written up in Flying Magazine, May 1948.) He served 32 years as Fireman-Engineer for LA Fire Department 1951-1983, receiving special commendation for saving lives. He moved to Santa Barbara in 1985 when he married Emily Nicholson. An avid handball player and a member of the National Chess Federation - he demonstrated a rare combo of mental and physical prowess. He was also a member of the Los Angeles Adventurers Club, remaining active and going on numerous expeditions: white water rafting, 5 trips down the Colorado River, canoeing and mountain climbing, including many peaks in the High Sierras and "Pico De Orizaba," the highest mountain in Mexico (18,491 ft.) He surprised his son one night while bar hopping in Red Lodge, Montana when he beat every challenger playing pool. Competing in handball tournaments nationwide and continuing to work in masonry, he completed many block walls and patios in his retirement years exhibiting his positive spirit and strong resilience. For the past 15 years up until February of 2012 he worked as head of security at the Arms and Blades Show at the Earl Warren Showgrounds.

We miss him tremendously, especially his clever sense of humor.

Bob was loved deeply by his family including his wife, Emily Birnie, brother Bill (and Barbara) Birnie of Balboa Island, sons Craig (and Misa) Birnie of Portland, Oregon and Reed Birnie (and Amy Jones) of Franklin, Tennessee and daughter, Janet Cox, of Santa Barbara. Step-children Dave Nicholson, Susan (and Willie) Poindexter and Paul (and Cindy) Nicholson of Santa Barbara, Daniel Nicholson (and Connie Turton) of Vancouver, Washington and Gregg Nicholson of Pahrump, Nevada. Nephews Brian (and Beth) Birnie of Pasadena, Doug (and Debi) Birnie of Colorado Springs, Colorado and niece Diane (and Larry) Bock of Olivenhain, California. Grandchildren: Kristian, Lanae and Nicolas Birnie, Spence (and Melissa Balter), Tyler, Nathan, Jake, Kelly, Amanda and Jeremiah Nicholson, Nicole Poindexter, Gilbert and Conrad Jones and great-grandson, Gabe Nicholson.

A memorial celebration and reception was held Saturday, June 9, 2012 at 1:30 pm at Unity Church of Santa Barbara.

# Tribute Wall

JF

“ *Sad to hear of Bob's passing. I am one of the handball players who used to play with him every Wednesday. He was known for his huge and very quick hands. It was kind of humbling to be beaten by someone 15 years older...*

*He was a terrific person to meet and I know he will leave a void in many people's lives.*

*Rest in peace Bob.*

*Jim Foster*

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**Jim Foster** - June 10, 2012 at 10:20 PM

JC

“ *1 file added to the album Bob's 80th Birthday*



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**Janet Cox** - June 06, 2012 at 11:55 PM

JC

“ *1 file added to the album Bob's 80th Birthday*



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**Janet Cox** - June 06, 2012 at 11:54 PM