



Russell L. Johnston Sr

May 20, 1930 - June 15, 2023

Russell L. Johnston, Sr., age 93, died peacefully at his home in Santa Barbara on June 15, 2023. He was born on May 20, 1930, in Johnson City, New York to Charles and Clara Johnston.

His first professional job was with Link Aviation, a company that made flight simulators for both commercial and military jets. He started as an expeditor but ended his eight years with Link Aviation as a Production Control manager for the Northrop F89 Scorpion project.

He moved to California in 1959 to be near his family who had moved here in 1954. Quite by accident he started working part time at a bowling center called West Valley Bowl in Canoga Park. Within a year, Russ became manager and remained there until 1963. Later that year, he moved to Santa Barbara to take over as manager of the "Fiesta Bowl."

From 1964 through 1969, he and his brother Vic opened a real estate company named Johnston Realty.

But in 1969, he once again got back into the vocation that had always been an avocation for him. Russ was hired as the manager of San Marcos Lanes, eventually becoming the co-proprietor/manager until the business was sold in 1989.

During his time at San Marcos, he organized squads of his bowlers to participate in tournaments around the state. He always took squads to both Encino Bowl for the Harry Grant Classic and to Pismo Bowl for their Annual Singles Tournament. But it was at the state tournament that he organized the biggest squads. San Marcos always had the largest squads of any bowling center in the state despite being in a small bowling community.

After retiring in 1989, Russ became a member of the Santa Barbara Bowling Association and served as tournament manager for both The Santa Barbara Festival Tournament and the Masters Tournament for many years. He was inducted into the Santa Barbara Bowling Hall of Fame for meritorious service to the sport of bowling.

His other passion along with bowling was classical music, which he first became enamored with as a teenager. He accumulated a vast collection of various media. He shared this music with the senior community at Vista Del Monte for many, many years.

He joined the Goleta Lions in 1968 and served as their Treasurer for twenty-one years. He received the Goleta Lions Man of the Year award, plus the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award from Lions International.

Russ is preceded in death by his parents, his wife Julia, his sister Beverly, brother William, brother Victor, and son Russell (Rusty) Johnston Jr. He is survived by his daughter Sandra (William), sons William and Kenneth and stepsons James (Angela), Stephen (Jennifer) and Thomas (Tonya) Rowe and daughter-in-law Amanda Johnston and many loving grand and great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life & BBQ will be held on 7/7/23, at Tuckers Grove (Area 5) at 1:00 p.m. For planning purposes, if you are sure you will attend, please

leave a message at (805) 964-9817, or use email:
Russ.Johnston7@yahoo.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUL 7. 1:00 PM (PT)

Tucker's Grove County Park
4800 Cathedral Oaks Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93111

Please see obituary for more information.

Tribute Wall

JC

“ Russ will always hold a special place in my heart. What an amazing man whom everyone at the bowling alley knew and respected. I first met Russ when I was asked to bowl in the sunset league about 12 years ago. Once he saw me bowl I became his designated sub bowler for the league. Matching up with any team that needed a sub that afternoon. I would usually get a voicemail from him Tuesday morning or Monday night letting me know which team I would be bowling with that week. Now I am part of our festival committee and in our committee we have a say that usually goes something like... "Go get those signups just like Russ would! Don't take no for an answer. I will miss him dearly and continue to share memories of him.

Jeff Carlson

Jeff Carlson - July 03, 2023 at 04:36 PM

RP

“ I remember i was 12/13 years old. I was standing at the desk in San Marcos Lanes with my dad. Russ was behind the desk working and i was trying to get his attention. So I yelled 'Hey Russ'. My dad immediately grabbed me by the arm and told me that was MR. JOHNSTON. This is his bowling alley and you will show respect. So for the last 46 years it has been 'MR. JOHNSTON' despite him telling me for decades that i was now an adult and to please just call him Russ. Last year we were in town and had the pleasure of having lunch with him and Amanda. It was a very well deserved 'MR. JOHNSTON' right til the end.

RIP MR. JOHNSTON

Rick Peter - June 29, 2023 at 06:22 PM