

DONALD LEROY HAMMOND

August 7, 1927 - April 8, 2021

Don Hammond passed away peacefully on Apr. 8, 2021 at the age of 93. Long-time resident of Palo Alto and Los Altos Hills, he was a kind and generous man with an exuberant love of life. A dedicated member of Wesley Methodist Church and well-respected in the local community, he will be missed by many.



Don was energetic, friendly and outgoing, with a genuine interest in people from all walks of life. He would often approach strangers and engage them in conversation. As friend and mentor, he offered understanding and encouragement; at work and in the community, he was recognized as a skillful leader and peacemaker.

Don was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on Aug. 7, 1927, to Clark E. and Laila Gertrude Hammond. Growing up with his brother Harold during the depression years, his family moved frequently, eventually settling in Burlington, Colorado, where Don attended high school and met his future wife, Phyllis Eulalia Whitmore (Whitty).

In 1945, Don volunteered for the Navy, serving in Japan after the war ended. After his service, he enrolled at Colorado State University, earning Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Physics. He often told the story of how the head of the Physics Department insisted that if he wanted to study Physics, he would have to wear a tie every day, which was a habit that stayed with him most of the rest of his life (even while working on his car, much to Whitty's dismay). His thesis on the physical properties of quartz opened up a lifetime of significant contributions in precision measurement and electronics.

Don and Whitty were married in 1949 while he was completing his education. He was a loving husband and father to his five children, often entertaining them with stories of his life on his grandfather's farm in Kansas. The family shared some wonderful times together, traveling around the country, camping, waterskiing, playing games and watching movies on Sunday afternoons - with popcorn and fudge as a special treat.

He and Whitty loved to sing, harmonizing beautifully on their signature song, "Sentimental Journey." The family often gathered around the piano and sang while he played. And their home was a warm and welcoming haven for friends from near and far.

After he left Colorado State, Don's career took him to New Jersey, where he worked at the Army Signal Corps. In 1956 he helped found a small company in Colorado, Scientific Electronic Products, which later became Colorado Crystal Corporation, on whose board he served.

In 1959 he moved to Palo Alto, recruited by Hewlett Packard for his widely acknowledged expertise in quartz crystals. Throughout his thirty-year career at HP,

Don worked in Research and Development, serving as the first Director of the Physical Electronics Lab. In 1984 Don and Whitty moved to Bristol, England where Don spent nearly three years leading the development of Hewlett-Packard's first European research center, with an emphasis on computer science, artificial intelligence and data communication.

Don retired in 1989 as Director of Hewlett-Packard Laboratories. Over the years he received many awards acknowledging the importance of his contributions. He was awarded an honorary PhD in Physics from CSU in 1974, and a second honorary PhD in Engineering in 1987 from the University of Bristol. Don was inducted into the National Academy of Engineering in 1987, and was a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. In 1992 he received the William E. Morgan Alumni Achievement Award from Colorado State University. He served on the boards of a number of start ups, including Nellcor, Iridex, Mid-Peninsula Bank of Palo Alto, and New Hope and Ivyland Railroad. He served on the Palo Alto School Board from 1970 to 1980, and was a member of the Task Force on Industrial Innovation for both President Carter and Governor Jerry Brown of California.

After Whitty suffered a stroke in 1991, Don cared for her until she passed away in 1997.

He was married to Kathe Ives in 1998 and they shared some good years together until her death in 2004 of ALS. He was remarried a second time to Tani Robe, an old family friend. They moved to Palo Alto Commons in 2010, and she passed away in 2014. Don's children are grateful for the excellent care that he received at the Commons, and especially for the kindness and devoted care from his personal caregiver Arnel Garcia.

Don's youngest daughter Nancy (Ross) Anderson passed away in 2012. His survivors include his children Debora Hammond, Kathryn (Don) Bers, Carol (Erik) Eidt, and Paul Hammond; his grandchildren Brian Bers, Rebecca Bers, Lisa Thompson, Philip Thompson, Daniel Anderson and Heather Anderson; and his two great-granddaughters Kitt and Mira Bers.

A Celebration of Don's Life will be held at Wesley Methodist Church in Palo Alto when it is safe to meet in person, and we will send a postcard to let you know when it will be. Charitable donations can be made to the Church or to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.