



Robert Lee Simmons

October 12, 1931 - December 7, 2023

Robert Lee Simmons (“Bob”) was born in Yakima, Washington on October 12, 1931, the second child and second son of Vern Owen Simmons and Della Dorothy Quinlan Simmons. He grew up during the Second World War, and learned about rationing food, growing vegetables and raising chickens. He moved to Salinas as a young child, where his parents worked in agriculture, packing produce into boxes as the crops were harvested. Following in their footsteps, he worked for several affiliated box companies his entire career, starting at Stockton Box Company in Lodi, California. He was then transferred to San Francisco, California with American Forest Products Corporation, American Box Division, and worked at the headquarters on Hyde Street, near the Cannery building and Cable Car turn-around for twenty years. He finally retired as the General Manager of American Box Corporation in Fresno, California. His family benefited greatly from this, as his farming customers sent beautiful fresh produce to them on a regular basis. Even after he retired he couldn’t stop working, and became a consultant for another box company.

Bob and Betty Ann Burke eloped to Reno, Nevada in 1951, much to the chagrin of Bob’s religious mother, who thought they should be properly married in the Catholic Church. They arranged for a Catholic ceremony shortly thereafter, and all was forgiven. His mother told his sister that Betty was “the best thing that ever happened to him.” Betty and Bob just celebrated their 72-year wedding anniversary on November 1st. During their life together they

enjoyed fishing, playing cards (especially Pinochle), watching the San Francisco Giants and the San Francisco 49ers, their children and grandchildren, family vacations at Twain Harte and Santa Barbara, and couples getaways to Hawaii.

From Spring 1952 to early 1954 Bob served in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict. Stationed at Camp Roberts in central California, Bob hitchhiked back to Stockton, California in time for the birth of his first child on Christmas in 1952. Seven more children arrived from 1954 to 1970, including one on the 4th of July! With Bob's birthday on Columbus Day, the family had lots of holiday birthdays.

Bob was an efficiency expert, and taught his eight children the best way to accomplish a task. They distinctly remember being trained by him in the proper way to sweep a floor. His motto, which they will never forget, was "Many hands make light work." Throughout his life, Bob demonstrated an outstanding work ethic and always encouraged his children to take pride in everything they do. In the 1990s, Bob started working on his family tree, and he shared many stories about his family and what it was like growing up. He loved history, politics, sports, good food, and reading. Always, always reading.

The last few months were difficult for him, as his health declined. Sadly, he took his last breath on Thursday night, December 7th, 2023, Pearl Harbor Day, with his wife holding his hand.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, and older brother Joseph Simmons. He is survived by his wife Betty, his eight children - Susan Simmons, Carolyn Provencio (Gino), Roberta Hughes, Liz Simmons (Ken Bulpitt), Vern Simmons, Terry Barnes (Steve), Mike Simmons (Brooke), and Patty Simmons, thirteen grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, his younger sisters Marge Morris and Patti Raspo, and many nieces and

nephews. We will miss him and his unique blend of intelligence and humor, as well as his great knowledge of history.

The family will have a private Celebration of Life for him after the holidays.