



January 3, 1928 - February 14, 2022

Donald Austin Smith, 94, passed away peacefully at home in Petaluma, California on February 14th, 2022. Don was born on January 3, 1928 at Petaluma General Hospital, ten minutes after his twin sister, Beverly. Don grew up in Petaluma and was a lifelong resident of the area. He graduated from Petaluma High School, attended SRJC, Golden Gate College, and Aero Industries Technical Institute. After high school, Don joined the USAF Air National Guard 194th Fighter squadron where he worked as an aircraft mechanic and in the parachute shop. Around the same time, he started working for his father's poultry business at the Penngrove Hatchery. In September 1953 Don married Jean Bayless and moved to Penngrove where they raised their two children, Linda and Austin, and a few thousand chickens. He was an active member of the Penngrove Volunteer Fire Department. In 1957 Don left the poultry business to pursue a career in insurance and spent the remainder of his career as an insurance broker, initially co-owning Barbera-Smith Insurance, and later, owning Insurance Marketing Associates.

Aside from his career, Don was a man with many interests, number one was flying; planes, gliders and hot air balloons. Hanging around the local airfield as a teenager, he learned to fly and was certified as a pilot in 1947. He loved flying search and rescue with the Civil Air Patrol, piloting high performance gliders in Australia, hot air ballooning in many places, and flying his own Cessna 172 plane from the Petaluma Airport. He was instrumental in the transformation of the former Petaluma Sky Ranch into the Petaluma Municipal Airport. Don believed in maintaining opportunities for local pilots and worked hard to preserve Sonoma County's airports, serving on the Petaluma and Sonoma County Airport Commissions and the Sonoma County Airport Land Use Commission.

Don and Jean loved to travel and went throughout the U.S. and around the

world. They returned many times to their favorite spots in Italy and Hawaii. Because of his love of Hawaii, Don took up scuba diving in 1986. He became a part owner of the Rohnert Park Dive Center, traveled and taught scuba diving for many years, diving in exotic locations around the world, and with his family in Hawaii. He also loved golf and was an avid golfer for several years, playing in Hawaii and at his favorite local courses.

Don felt strongly about serving his community, participating in and volunteering for several organizations: Petaluma Kiwanis, Petaluma Elks, **SIRs** and Petaluma Area Pilots Association. Don loved to cook, and he enjoyed serving many dinners for friends and organizations over the years, sometimes serving large crowds for fund raising events.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Samuel Smith and Edna Austin Smith, sister Beverly Wilson, and brother Robert Smith. He is survived by his loving wife of 68 years, Jean, his daughter Linda Canar (Michael), son Austin Smith (Debi), granddaughter Rachel Canar (Hagai Shklar), granddaughter Melanee O'Hagan, grandson Aaron Smith, and great granddaughters Rosanna O'Hagan, Ella Shklar, and Luci O'Hagan. He is also survived by sister-in-law Evelyn Pedroni (late John) and several nieces, nephews, and cousins. Don will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, and by some local friends as "Uncle Don". Don's was a life well lived and loved! His energy and love for life will be greatly missed.

The family would like to express gratitude to his caregivers: Mosese Rova, Palu Cava, Vani Dulaki, and Meleia Bole. A private family interment will be held, with a Celebration of Life to be scheduled later this spring. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Petaluma Area Pilots Association Scholarship Fund (Don Smith Memorial) at 601 Sky Ranch Drive, Petaluma, CA 94954 or to Hospice of Petaluma.