



Leonard Morgan Svinth

September 12, 1931 – April 1, 2023

Len Svinth, age 91, passed away quietly of heart failure on April 1, 2023. Surrounded by his loving wife Ruth and his family, he left this world to join family and friends in heavenly glory. Len was preceded in death by his parents Frederick and Anna (Martinson) Svinth, and siblings Betty and Donald.

A graduate of Humboldt State University with a BS in Botany, Len served proudly in the US Air Force during & after the Korean War and met and married the love of his life (Mary) Ruth Kirkegaard while stationed in Colorado. He served as a Statistician in Ramstein, Germany. Upon his return he continued his education, earned a master's degree in education from Humboldt State and taught for one year in Millbrae CA. In 1960, he began his long and storied teaching career in Petaluma, teaching from 1960 to 1994 at Petaluma Junior High School. During this time, he taught Math and Science, focusing on Earth Science, Zoology, Biology and Chemistry. Len organized and led many memorable trips with 9th or 8th grade students to Yosemite National Park and Lassen National Park as part of the Earth Science curriculum. He was PJHS Student Activities Director, developed the Summer Science Institute, and taught adult Night School for many years. After retiring in 1994, he taught for six years at Dominican College in Marin County. Throughout his career he taught Summer School, he worked as a Summer Salesman for Nabisco, taught a Seniors Safe Driving course, and worked as a Forest Ranger for the USFS.

Len has been an active member of Elim Lutheran Church for more than 60 years, leading EYA (Elim Youth Alive) with his wife Ruth during the 1960's and serving in many capacities including Council President and on Call Committees. He was an active member and President of PEP (Petaluma Ecumenical Properties) for many years. He was a member of SIR's Petaluma Branch 58 since 1995 and served as Big Sir and Chaplain. He and Ruth volunteered for many years at a local food bank, were active members in the Bay Area Campers group until recently. Len also coached youth baseball and was a leader in Shamrock 4-H club while his children were young.

Len always tried to not take life for "Granite" with his wonderful sense of humor – clean, comedic, and very corny – which will be missed by family, students, colleagues, and friends. His humor and quiet faith in God were essential to Len's life. His welcoming manner, love of education and the natural world were central to who he was – he made a positive impact wherever he put his energy. He took great pleasure and pride in his beautiful yard, sharing the abundance of flowers, fruits and vegetables. He and Ruth hosted several wedding receptions and anniversary parties there.

Len is survived by his wife of 66 years Ruth, children Ron (Kim), Kresten (Fred Mansen), and Fred (Maria), grandchildren Jon (Adrienne) Mansen, Andy (Michelle) Mansen, Jared, Veronika (Herbert) Martinez, Kira, Dane and Luke Svinth, and great grandchildren Ty, Brett, Matthew, and Jacob Hansen. He will be missed by many "extra" kids – those who were students, neighbors, young people he mentored and had the honor to lead and assist from childhood to adulthood.

A Memorial service will be held at Elim Lutheran Church at 504 Baker Street in Petaluma on Monday, May 29th at 11am.

In lieu of flowers, his family ask that you consider a donation to Petaluma Ecumenical Properties: www.pephousing.org/donate or Elim Lutheran Church: www.elimpetaluma.org/give.html) in Petaluma.