



JOHN ALLISON SMOAK

August 8, 1929 - September 19, 2015

John A. Smoak, age 86, died September 19, 2015 at his home in Penn Valley. He was born August 8, 1929 in Columbia, South Carolina and moved to California in 1935. Both of his parents were deaf, so not only was he very proficient at sign language, but he and his sister Joyce Smoak Cox became well known advocates for the deaf in the Sacramento community.

John graduated from Sacramento State University with a degree in English, and followed that with a Master's Degree in English and a Doctorate in Education. His entire career was spent in education employed by Sacramento Unified School District. Those roles included classroom teacher, counselor, principal and administrator.

Before he began his career, he was drafted into the Army during the Korean War. He loved meeting other veterans and exchanging "war" stories.

He retired from education and married his wife, Zella Jacobson Smoak in 1995. She was living in Nevada County and he moved to the foothills when they married. John loved the community and became actively involved in the Grand Jury, the Pleasant Valley School Board, the Nevada County Board of Education, the Foothill Theater Board, and as an interpreter in the Nevada and Yolo County Courts. He was an accomplished mediator, a Shakespeare quoter, a great dancer and a moderately successful fisherman. He and Zella traveled the world, but his favorite place was Ireland. He could fake an Irish accent and sing pub songs like a true born.

He is survived by his wife, Zella, his sister, Joyce Cox, and his four daughters,

Michele (Barney) Yannacone, Carol (Jim) Patterson, Patrice (Darryl) DeHart, and Andie (Dave) McRice. His girls brought him great joy. He is also survived by 9 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, John.

His stepsons, Russell Jacobson and David Jacobson and their families will miss his football talk and seeing the RV roll into Santa Cruz for the weekend. We will feel the sunshine on our faces and think of him.

Arrangements are under the care of Chapel of the Angels Mortuary.