



John Joseph Futini

July 12, 1920 - September 2, 2018

Born on July 12, 1920, in Salinas, California to Giuseppi and Pierina Futini, John Joseph Futini passed away at age 98 on September 2, 2018 in Concord, California. He was one of the last remaining World War II Veterans. A graduate of Salinas High School in 1939, he was one of only a few to learn to type. As a young man he raised Black Angus steers for many years for 4H. As an early PGE employee, he helped support his family during the Great Depression. He enlisted in the US Army in 1941 where he honorably served as a supply truck driver and his highly sought after typing skills were utilized in communications. As a Corporal he was assigned to a P-38 aircraft squadron in the 13th Army Air Corps Fighter Command, Pacific Theater from 1943 to 1945. He used to say when asked if he was a pilot, "I flew a typewriter." He was awarded the World War II Victory Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, American Defense Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and was a designated sharpshooter.

In 1948 he married the love of his life, Melba Lemos of Benicia and they had just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary this year. They lived in Vallejo with their three children before moving to Napa in 1965. During his life John supported his family as an 18-wheeler truck driver, but he was also an accomplished self-taught artist and enjoyed landscaping their homes from scratch. His love of art and landscaping led to his becoming a professional landscape architect and nursery department manager. Into his 80's he was still gardening and was hired to maintain the grounds of many stately Napa homes and businesses. His business card read "Rosarian and Horticulturist." He knew all the Latin names of all trees, plants, and flowers by memorizing a complete guide to horticulture. The bookshelves in his office were filled with books about gardening. In his 90's he discovered a new type of rose that had not yet been documented as he worked with the roses in their backyard. He worked with the National Registry of Roses for years and received confirmation that in fact, this rose was not in the registry, it was a new type of rose. He named this rose after his wife, calling it the Melba Lemos rose, a pretty, pink, fragrant blossom.

John had so many accomplishments in his lifetime and was fiercely independent and

proud of it. At his last DMV license renewal review at age 95, he had perfect vision and scored a perfect 100 on the written test. John was always civic-minded, attending many public meetings and ran for Napa County Board of Supervisors in 1976. He also led the restoration of the historic Old Calvary Cemetery in Salinas, which was a ten-year project. He loved adventure and traveled widely with his family to many places in the US and abroad including Washington DC for the grand opening of the WWII Memorial, the eastern United States and numerous locales in the West including Alaska. His favorite place by far was the Grand Canyon. He hiked down to the bottom of the canyon three times- twice with his family and once in 1987 at the age of 67 rim-to-rim by himself. Internationally he traveled with his family to British Columbia, Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Monaco, and the Azores, the home of Melba's family. One of his hobbies was photography and his photographs adorn the walls of their home in Napa. He was a devoted family man who spent all his time with his family when he wasn't working. A strong believer in education, he interested his three children to attend and graduate from college. He is survived by his wife Melba, son John S. Futini (Jaime), daughters Norma Saunders (Royce) and Andrea Murphy (Greg), his sister Toni Mitchell, grandsons Greg Andrew Murphy and Trevor John Murphy, numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins. He was predeceased by his sisters Elena Bass and Mary Boekenoogen.

Donations in lieu of flowers can be sent to the Old Calvary Cemetery Restoration Fund at PO Box 2048, Monterey, CA 93942. A memorial service celebrating John's life will be held at Claffey and Rota Funeral Home, 1975 Main St, Napa, on Wednesday September 19th at 1pm with light refreshments from 2pm to 3pm. John will be laid to rest with military honors at a private burial at the Sacramento Valley National Veteran's Cemetery in Dixon, CA.

Cemetery

Events

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery

5810 Midway Rd.

Dixon, CA, 94558

SEP

19

Memorial Service 01:00PM - 02:00PM

Claffey & Rota Funeral Home

1975 Main Street, Napa, CA, US, 94559

Comments



“ My dad, William Huntley is buried right next to Mr. Futini. My family met his wife at the cemetery. Thank you for your honorable service to our country Mr. Futini. My heartfelt condolences to his family.

judy - October 01, 2018 at 10:11 AM



“ I am very sorry to not have been able to make it to the memorial service, JUST EVEN ONE TIME to come to Napa, somewhat ashamed, knowing that John and Melba both would make MONTHLY trips from 2002 thru 2013 to Salinas, Ca to chair the meetings of our Old Calvary Cemetery Restoration committee, of which he held very dear to his heart.

John was instrumental in rallying up enough locals here, to serve on the committee, to help restore/revitalize the cemetery, of which he helped us raise the funds necessary to do so. He worked tirelessly with me and others, including making additional special trips to attend other highly attended local events here, to help raise funds.

My prayers for John to be in that special place where he can now once again unite with his beloved parents, of whom he talked fondly of and are buried here at Old Calvary. What makes us all content is that in my last emails with John, just this year, he mentioned how fully satisfied and content that he is that we are continuing on with keeping up the cemetery and having annual Memorial Day walking tours, which was one of his main long- term goals for the cemetery in order to keep perpetual public interest for the good of the entire cemetery.

It hasn't been easy to fill into John's huge shoes he left us to head the committee, but I've been thinking of John's spirit to help along the way, and THAT HAS HELPED. I will never forget him.

Wayne Gularte

Wayne Gularte - September 22, 2018 at 12:42 AM



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Norma Saunders - September 21, 2018 at 06:23 PM



“ Our heartfelt sympathy to the family of John Futini. We have so many happy memories over the many years of friendship with John. May you take comfort in your memories.

Fondly,
Bill and Ellie Rogalski

Ellie Rogalski - September 20, 2018 at 01:02 PM



“ Thank you to everyone who attended the memorial services yesterday, and to those who sent flowers and posted memories. My family really appreciates your kind and thoughtful support. My father was truly the rock of our family throughout the years. Growing up, I recall my mother saying that he knew how to do so many things himself, saving the family money, and he did. Whether it was repairing the car, planting a garden, building a patio cover, or planning a vacation, he did it all on his own without the help of professionals. Even in recent years – well into his 90's - he was able to do so many things independently and with minimal help from others. Keeping his driver's license active, he drove himself and my mother to their appointments and drove to the stores to do all the shopping. He maintained the house, prepared meals, and handled the finances. His computer skills rivaled those of someone from the millennial generation, and he was often in his home office working on his computer when I called or visited. In the past year, after he was no longer able to drive to the store, he decided to order some of his groceries online in between his daughters' shopping trips. Other than a few times when he accidentally ordered 6 cases instead of 6 packages of a product, that went really well. I don't think I ever heard my father say that he couldn't do something, and it was that "can do" attitude that helped him to be successful in so many things throughout his life. While it's comforting to know that my father lived a very long life into his late 90's, it's also very hard to lose him after having him in my life for so many years. I'm going to miss him very, very much.

Andrea Futini Murphy - September 20, 2018 at 10:45 AM



“ Andrea,
Been feeling nostalgic since returning home to California a few years ago. Stumbled across this while googling and loved your tribute and his wonderful obituary. Please offer condolences to your family. My parents are still with us, 87 and 91, and drove down to stay with my husband and I this Thanksgiving,
Love and light to you and all, Tina Kister (Brown)

Tina Kister (Brown) - November 28, 2018 at 12:45 AM



“ John was such a doer who made his unique mark in this world. I will always remember our interesting conversations about gardening, history and his inspirational, beautiful garden. He will be missed by many.

Laura Celis - September 19, 2018 at 12:59 PM



“ From Andrea and Maria Stella and Busana family purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of John Joseph Futini.



Maria Stella Busana - September 18, 2018 at 04:07 PM



“ Leona, Roy, James, Lory and Samantha purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of John Joseph Futini.



Leona, Roy, James, Lory and Samantha - September 16, 2018 at 07:25 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of John Joseph Futini.



September 16, 2018 at 06:04 PM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of John Joseph Futini.



September 15, 2018 at 04:04 PM



“ I am the neighbor across the street with the covered car out front. We have lived here over 20 years. My memories of "Johnny" were centered around an intelligent, engaging, and independent man. He made this street one of the special places one can find in life, and also be so fortunate to have a great neighbor. We send our wishes for peace and long lasting great memories. Gabriele and Doug Larson.

gabriele sudmann - September 15, 2018 at 01:41 PM



“ RICHARD AND BRIDGETTE purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of John Joseph Futini.



RICHARD AND BRIDGETTE - September 15, 2018 at 11:31 AM



“ Brandi, Michael, Frank and Bette purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of John Joseph Futini.



Brandi, Michael, Frank and Bette - September 14, 2018 at 01:54 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of John Joseph Futini.



September 09, 2018 at 04:12 PM