



Donald "Don" Charles Burtis

December 6, 1927 - December 11, 2018

Donald "Don" Charles Burtis passed away on December 11, 2018, at the age of 91 in Woodland, CA.

He was born in Marysville on December 6, 1927. He grew up in Sutter and lived there until moving to Yuba City in 1946, where he resided until his death.

He was the son of Floyd "Fud" Burtis and Genevieve Caldwell Burtis, both descendants of pioneer families of Colusa County.

On September 10, 1950, he married Beryl Vertrees. Their marriage lasted 67 happy years until her passing earlier this year.

Don graduated from Sutter High School in 1945, and earned teaching and administrative credentials from Sacramento State University.

He spent 40 years as an educator, first as a teacher at Bridge Street School, later as a music teacher and vice-principal at Gray Avenue School and then principal at Robbins, Central-Gaither and Tierra Buena schools. He retired in 1988.

While raising his children, he worked summers as a weigh master at T.F. Burns Trucking in Yuba City. He attended the Yuba City Methodist Church for many years and was a life member of the Free and Accepted Masons of California, Enterprise Lodge No. 70.

Don had a lifelong interest in music. He led his own dance band in the 1940s and was an accomplished player of the clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, ukulele, tin whistle and piano, as well as a composer and arranger. He was also a talented vocalist, singing in church, at weddings and funerals and whenever he had the opportunity.

He led the choir at Gray Avenue School and once performed in a production of Hello Dolly at Yuba City High School. He was a fan of both classical music and musical theatre, taking his family for many years to attend the San Francisco Symphony and the Music Circus in Sacramento. He was also very involved with the Community Concert Association.

Don greatly enjoyed traveling, taking his family to 49 of the 50 states (missing Nebraska) over many summers. He and his wife Beryl also traveled to many different countries.

Don was an avid historian, with a particular interest in the schools and early history of Sutter County. He was an occasional contributor to the Sutter County Historical Bulletin and served as a tour guide for bus trips around his beloved Sutter Buttes multiple times. After retirement he developed a keen interest in genealogy, traveling as far as Evansville,

Indiana, to visit the grave of his great-great-grandfather, Jesse Burtis. He also volunteered many, many hours doing research for the Sutter County Library.

Don is survived by three children; Eileen (Barry) Milligan of Yuba City, CA, Kenneth (Lindy) Burtis of Woodland, CA, and Colleen (Gary) Pelfrey of Live Oak, CA; four grandchildren, Melissa Milligan of Yuba City, CA, Michelle Milligan of Portland, OR, Mason Pelfrey of Boulder, CO, and Reid Pelfrey of Live Oak, CA.

In keeping with Don's wishes, a celebration of life for both Don and his wife Beryl will be held later this spring.

If you wish to make a donation in his name, contributions to the Sutter County Library or to the Sutter County Community Memorial Museum would be appreciated.