



## Kieth Macomb Rucker

July 10, 1922 - April 2, 2020

Keith Macomb Rucker of Chico Ca, Orland Ca and Lake Almanor Ca passed away at home on April 2, 2020 from natural causes. He was 97 years old. He was born in 1922 in Durango Colorado. Keith graduated High School in Durango and attended the University of New Mexico. Keith interrupted his college education to serve in the United States Navy during the second world war. Keith served as a firefighter and Chief at the US Naval air base in Holtsville. Keith loved to tell the story that the only time he got shot at in the war was when he was fighting the fire of a crashed airplane. Things were progressing normally when the machine gun control wiring suddenly shorted out and the plane fired off its entire compliment of ammunition pinning him between the burning fuselage and the guns in the wings. He was shaken, but uninjured.

After the war Keith served as a Ranger at Mesa Verde National Park. He had many adventures with his family and friends camping and hiking and exploring in and around the "4 corners" part of our country. His respect for the Anastasi and other "First Nations" people stayed with him all his life. Keith eventually returned to the University of New Mexico and completed his degree in Civil Engineering. He surveyed and helped design roads in the area around Platoro Colorado then hired on with the Richfield Oil company who had just discovered major oil reserves in Southern California. Keith worked designing oil pipelines in the Bakersfield and Los Angeles area. While working for Richfield (who later merged with Atlantic Oil to become ARCO) Keith camped, hiked and boated in the Summer and Snow skied in the winter.

Keith learned to snow ski as a boy in Colorado when he and a friend obtained some World War One surplus wooden skis. He became known in the Durango area as an avid skier and once took Warren Miller (of ski films fame) on a tour of the local mountains that were skiable. Back then, skiing consisted of driving your car to the top of a mountain pass, hiking up the rest of the way to the top of a hill and then strapping 8 foot long wooden skis to your feet and skiing down the mountain to where you left a second car. Keith continued skiing well into his 70s. He was always known for his skiing style which he began as a boy in Colorado. His style consisted of him flying along, making long and graceful "S" turns all

the way down the fall line of the mountain. You could always pick him out from a distance as this contrasted with everyone else making little, short, parallel turns. In his later years Keith delighted in telling people in the lift lines that he was skiing for free as they often gave anyone over 70 free skiing passes.

When Keith moved to California, he joined the newly formed Sierra Club chapter in Bakersfield and became known as an informal ski instructor. He taught many of his engineer friends to ski. He and his friends met up with a bunch of young schoolteachers from the Porterville High School at a Sierra Club meeting. Many of them asked that they (he) teach them to ski. The group became fast friends and spent many weekends skiing at the newly constructed badger pass ski area in Yosemite National Park and staying at the old Ahwahnee Hotel. Keith fell in love with one of his ski "students", Anne Hazelton and they were later married in 1952.

When Anne's father suffered a stroke, Keith took vacation from Richfield and traveled back to her hometown of Orland Ca. where he assisted in the day to day operation of the family's business "Hazelton Lumber Co." He quickly decided to make the move permanent and spent the next 30 years managing the business and using his engineering knowledge to help many customers and friends "build the land of Orland."

Keith and Anne raised their children, John Rucker (Margie) of Chico Ca and Jane Rucker Phillips (Albert) of Livermore Ca, in Orland. They spent many years with good friends skiing, Sail boating, Camping and RVing in Northern California. Keith and Anne were active members of their community. Keith served on the School Board, City Council, the Kiwanis Club, the "Black Butte Yacht Club" and was a supporter of Anne and his family in their many activities. Keith was the steady, supportive hand that led the rest of the family (and many others) to their successes. Keith had an "inventive" mind and assisted many customers and friends with designing innovative solutions to life's many needs. He saw no need to charge or profit from his ideas and, instead, gained pleasure in seeing others succeed. In the early 1960s, Anne's Mother, Lilah Hazelton asked Keith to help her build a mountain home on Lake Almanor. Keith and his associates built the "cabin" on Lassen View Drive in the Lake Almanor Country Club which became a second home for family and friends. With much laughter and comradery, they enjoyed many years sailing, fishing, hiking and visiting at the cabin.

Keith and Anne were an avid Sailboat racing "team" for many years and successfully competed in many northern California regattas. Sailing trips to the San Juan Islands and the California Delta with family and friends led to larger and larger boats. Eventually they moved their boating endeavors to San Francisco Bay where they enjoyed docking their 30-footer in Richmond's Marina Bay.

In 1988 Keith and Anne retired and sold the family business. They made the cabin at Lake Almanor their permanent residence and “hit the road” in their latest of many RV’s. They extensively traveled the United States and Canada as members of the Family Motor Coach Association and the Beaver Owners Group. Notable trips included travelling across Canada on “Canada One,” placing their RV on a barge and rafting down the Mississippi river, caravanning with other RVers to Mexico’s Copper Canyon and RV trips to Alaska.

In 2004 they sold the cabin at Lake Almanor and moved to Chico California to get out of the snow and be closer to their grandchildren, Leanna Rucker Glander (Dale) of Chico and Peter Rucker (Kelsey) of Sacramento and Elizabeth Phillips of Livermore Ca. They also welcomed into this world their great grandchildren, Gabriella and Logan Glander of Chico. They moved into the Chico Mobile Country Club where they made many friends and were active members in their community.

Rather than slow down at that point, Keith and Anne decided that they had “at least one more boat in them” and purchased a 36 foot trawler that he and Anne docked in Emeryville California next their son’s boat. Many happy years passed with family and friends enjoying the “condos on the ocean” in the Emerycove Yacht harbor. Family trips to the California Delta and other anchorages were staged out of Emeryville and Keith and his dog “Duffy” were well known on the docks of the bay.

After Anne passed away in 2017, Keith spent the rest of that first year living in their old house with the assistance of the good people at Home Instead Senior Care. He then announced to his family one day that he wanted to make a change. He had learned that the Inn at the Terraces assisted living community was being built at California Park in Chico. He and his son met with the construction manager, reviewed the facility’s plans and before they knew it, he had picked out his new apartment with a “3rd floor view” and put a deposit down to live there once it was constructed. He had always loved construction and he enjoyed watching it and the rest of the neighborhood being built. Keith was one of the first guests to move into the facility when it opened. He spent the rest of his life there happily enjoying the staff, his family and his friends and visitors- and reading many books.

Keith lived a very full life with many civic contributions, adventures and friends. One day his exhausted son confronted him as he and Anne were making one of their many retirement visits to his family, “Dad, how did you do it?” meaning how did he fit so much into his life? His answer came back sternly, “It doesn’t just happen, you have to make it happen. Put as much energy into your personal life as you do your professional life.” Keith and Anne often talked about how many of their childhood friends did not survive or barely

survived World War II and how grateful and responsible they felt to live the full lives that their friend's sacrifice had given them. Their generation was an inspiration to anyone who was fortunate enough to know them.

Keith chose not to have a service as he felt that the lovely service he had for Anne in 2017 was for both of them. He will be laid to rest along-side Anne in the Orland Cemetery with his family in attendance at some future date.

# Cemetery

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## **Orland Cemetery**

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Orland, CA,

# Comments

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“ Keith joined my singing group at the Inn for the last year of his life. He had a sharp mind and sense of humor that we will miss greatly. We sang Somewhere Over the Rainbow in his honor the day he passed.

**pam Sachs** - April 27, 2020 at 11:12 AM

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“ We were saddened to read of Keith's passing, but were appreciative of reading his tribute in the Enterprise Record. His life was full; we always liked and respected him greatly in the time that we knew both Keith and Anne. Being members of the "Black Butte Yacht Club" we enjoyed many sailing activities with them and have such fond memories of that time. Keith, an experienced sailor was always eager to share sailing tips with we novices. The family meetings of the club were some of the best of times, always fun!  
We hope the family is doing well. Please know you are in our thoughts at this time.  
Larry and Ellen Pastorino

**Ellen Pastorino** - April 15, 2020 at 09:00 PM