



# Leo Kjelberg Sorensen

APR 25, 1930 - JUN 11, 2019



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OAKLAND

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eo Kjelberg Sorensen

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“In life you need 3 things:

Something to do,

Someone to love, and

Something to dream about”

Leo died unexpectedly in his home in Oakland, CA at the age of 89, surrounded by his family.

Born in Odense, Denmark, Leo was the second of four children to Kaja and Hans Sorensen. He graduated from Mercantile College in Odense, after which he entered into service as a Merchant Marine. After spending a year sailing the world, he returned to Denmark and enlisted in the Royal Danish Artillery where he served as a Staff Sergeant for 2 years.

In December of 1955 Leo decided to leave his fiancée, his home and everything he knew to immigrate to the United States to pursue his dreams. In 1956, after a long year apart, Leo flew back to Denmark to marry his now wife Ellen, and eventually was able to bring her here to live with him in Oakland. His immigration to this country was a core milestone that drove both his ambition as well as his character.

Leo started his career in the United States working for his Uncle's Nursery by delivering plants to customers. His drive to succeed lead him to the Pacific Bell Telephone company where he rose to



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the position of government relations manager which afforded him the opportunity to be involved in many areas of his political passions. He devoted 25 years of his life to the company and his position.

Still eager to make his mark, Leo retired from the company and took his first steps to start his own by purchasing rental properties within Oakland, despite the city's challenges. Over time he became a successful self-made property developer and entrepreneur.

Leo's impact on the city of Oakland is immeasurable and his accomplishments cannot be overstated. A few of his most notable ones are as follows:

Lake Merritt Breakfast Club Member

Long time member of the Oakland Hills Tennis Club

Founding Director of ProEnglish

Civil Service Commission

Redevelopment Agency Vice Chairman

Economic Development Advisory Commission

Founder of the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program

Alameda County Charter Review Commission

State of California Telecommunications Advisory Commission

Member of the New Oakland Committee

Government Relations Manager

Oakland Property Developer and Investor



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Together, Leo and Ellen built a life for themselves and each other. In 1959 they welcomed their first son Marc into the world. He was soon followed by their second son, Eric, in 1962 and finally by Thomas in 1970. Providing for his family was without question his main priority and driving force.

In his free time, Leo enjoyed nothing more than an early morning game of tennis, brunch with his beloved wife, and enjoying friends and family time, often in his favorite place, Lake Tahoe.

His passion for Tennis was matched only by his passion for his business. He created strong and lasting relationships with his tenants and his employees through his integrity, his kindness and his genuine desire to make people happy.

Leo's tenacity, humor, generosity and dedication is an inspiration us to live every moment to its fullest. He will be remembered as a loving and devoted husband, a strong and determined father and an adoring grandfather.

Leo is survived by his wife Ellen, his brother Tom, his 3 sons; Marc, Eric and Thomas, and their families, including 5 grandchildren.

He will be missed by all of those fortunate enough to have known him. If you wish to express your condolences, please make a donation to the Leukemia Cancer Foundation, or to another charity of your choosing.



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Leo by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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