

Albert Victor Kaelin



Albert Victor Kaelin June 22, 1916 - August 24, 2009 MT. ANGEL - "Al", as he was known to his loving family and many friends, passed away at home in Mount Angel, on August 24th at the age of 93. Al and his beloved wife of forty years, Corky, were residents of Salem since 1981. They moved to the Providence Benedictine care community in Mount Angel a few years ago. Al was one of the few surviving members of the American Volunteer Group the Flying Tigers serving from September 1941 until December 1942. He was honorably discharged from the Air Force and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious achievement in 1962 by executive order of the President. Al and Corky shared many happy memories of Tiger Reunions, including a trip to China where the Tigers were honored by the government for their service. Al served as secretary of the AVG for several years in his retirement. Al gave an interview about his Flying Tigers experience to a Willamette student in 2002. In that interview, Al stated, "That's the past [referring to his military service] . . .this is the present." Al's retirement years were devoted to a wide variety of volunteer work in the Salem community and beyond. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Willamette athletics, volunteering his time to work directly with the athletes on the field and on the court. He believed passionately in education, devoting his time to the Salem Public Library and the Olympics of the Mind. He was an active participant and contributor with the Institute of Continued Learning. A lover of sports all his life, Al could be found in the stands at high school and college contests from volleyball and basketball to baseball, football and swimming, cheering both men's and women's teams. He was an avid golfer, as a player well into his 80's and a student of the game all his life. He organized and competed in golf tournaments at his home course in Salem and volunteered as a marshal at PGA tournaments throughout the Northwest. Born in San Francisco, California, Al was the eldest son of John and Emma Kaelin. He had two siblings, Alma and John. Alma joined the Sisters of the Holy Family becoming Sister Christine Kaelin. She spent her life educating children and serving the poor. John was Al's friend as well as his brother. He died in service to his country at Pearl Harbor in 1941. Al graduated from Mission High School in San Francisco and attended Heald Business College. He married Juliette Mirande in 1946. They raised two daughters in the San Francisco Bay Area. Juliette passed away in 1967. Al met and married Coralie "Corky" Johnson in 1969. They moved to Palatine, Illinois the following year. Al worked for U.S. Plywood, which was purchased by Champion Paper International, as a Regional Credit Manager. He and Corky retired to Salem in 1981. Al is survived by his wife, Corky; daughter, Jeanine Kaelin Jensen; stepdaughters, Sherry Anderson and Cara Johnson; son-in-law, Doug Jensen; grandchildren, Scott Bellew, Alex Jensen, Kelsi Jensen, and Jason Anderson. He will be missed by his family and many friends. So long, Al. Memorial services will be held at 11:30 a.m., Sat., Sept. 5 at the Chapel of Providence Benedictine Nursing Center, Mount Angel. A reception in celebration of Al's life will immediately follow at Bavarian Haus restaurant in Mount Angel. Donations in memory of Al are gratefully accepted to any of the following: Bearcat Athletic Fund, Willamette University Development Office, 900 State Street, Salem, OR 97301; Flying Tigers Association (Scholarship Fund), Chuck Baisden, Treasurer, 109 Wales Court, Savannah, GA 31410-4310; Salem Public Library Collections Development, Library Administration, P.O. Box 14810, Salem OR 97309. Arrangements by Howell-Edwards-Doerksen with Rigdon-Ransom Funeral Directors.