

In Memoriam

HIRAM PIERCE

Nov. 30, 1931 – May 19, 2016

Resident of Palo Alto

Hiram was born on his older sister's third birthday. His other sister was 5 years his junior. They grew up in Houston, Texas. He was a free, independent, and inventive spirit. While in high school he had a scholarship to study art at the Museum of Art. This was the start of broadening his horizons. After graduation he joined the Navy. He served as a wood pattern maker on a destroyer tender for 4 years. Much of that time was spent in Japan.



While in San Diego he discovered international folk dancing which became a lifelong passion. His other lifelong interest was art. He made many drawings, sketches, and paintings, especially watercolors. He had difficulty talking without a pencil in his hand. He decided to work as an artist which led him to move to Chicago for a couple of years and then on to California. He worked as a graphic artist or tech illustrator for many years until the field was computerized and then went into real estate. He would buy fixer uppers, do the rehab himself, and resell the houses to low-income people enabling several families to become homeowners. He always had several projects going and more in his mind.

He was married very briefly after his discharge from the Navy, a second time for 10 years and then he met Arden Cordray. They were married and enjoyed life together for 48 years. Shortly after they wed they bought 10 acres of land in the Santa Cruz Mountains and called it Planina, the Serbian word for mountain. Hiram organized 3-4 folk dance campouts each year for 20 years. He formed the Church of Planina of which he was the main pastor. He officiated at many weddings, some memorials and made himself available to people as needed.

He will be missed. He is survived by his wife, Arden, and blended family: daughter, Lynn Kuchenbecker, stepchildren Michael Ray, Alix Cordray, Virginia Harrington, Gail Webster, Jacqueline McGreal, and Edmund Cordray, 17 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren and several nieces and their families. Daughter Katherine Garoutte and a nephew predeceased him. A memorial celebration will be held at a later date, probably on July 15.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Brain Support Network (www.brainsupportnetwork.org), the Humanists of Silicon Valley, or a folk dance organization of your choice.

—From Arden Pierce