



Chester John Ornes

September 19, 1957 - March 17, 2026

Chester Ornes, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and brother, passed away unexpectedly from a devastating brain bleed on March 17, 2026, surrounded by the love of his family.

He was the devoted husband of Herma for 37 years; a loving father to Laura (Jon), John, and Neal; a proud and playful “Opa” to Brooke and Beau; and a dear brother to Raf and Maria and their spouses Annegret and Derk.

Chester was born to Bertha Serrato and John Ornes and grew up in Tustin, California. He went on to earn his undergraduate degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara. After college, he began his career as a systems engineer with Hughes Aircraft, which took him across Europe. It was during this time, in 1988 in Maastricht, Netherlands, that he met Herma.

Chester and Herma built their relationship in Maastricht before moving to California in 1990. There, Chester completed his graduate degree at the University of California, Irvine, and earned a patent in collaboration with the university. Over 37 years of marriage, they built a strong and steady partnership, raising their family while navigating careers, moves, and all that life brought. Chester was a reliable and supportive husband, someone Herma could count on through every stage of life.

Chester gave himself selflessly, always putting his loved ones first. As a husband, he was steady and supportive. As a father, he was extraordinary—fully invested in his children’s lives and futures. He worked tirelessly to provide every opportunity for them to succeed, encouraging their interests, showing up without fail, and believing in them at every step. He coached all three of his children in multiple sports, led chess club, and was a constant presence on sidelines, at practices, and in everyday moments that mattered most. His guidance, patience, and quiet confidence shaped who they are today.

As an Opa, he had a special gift: the ability to meet his grandchildren at their level, filling

their time together with joy and laughter. Every Friday, Chester would pick up Brooke from school, where she would run into his arms shouting “Opa!” with excitement. Their weekly tradition often included a trip for frozen yogurt—something he delighted in, no matter the sugar rush that followed. With his youngest grandchild Beau, he shared countless playful and tender moments that reflected his deep love and devotion.

In 2002, he and his young family settled in Corvallis, Oregon. He co-founded Levrum Inc., where his sharp mind, dry humor, and relentless curiosity left a lasting impression (and, at times, lovingly tested the patience of his colleagues).

Over the years, Chester became an expert in machine learning, data mining, process imaging, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. He mentored many graduate students through Oregon State University capstone projects, often focused on financial engineering and automated stock market trading—a passion he continued to pursue until his final days.

Outside of his work and his deep commitment to his family, Chester enjoyed reading, following sports, and a good nap—simple pleasures that suited his quiet and steady nature.

Chester lived quietly and privately, but the impact he made on those around him was profound. He was a man of deep love and unwavering dedication to his family. To them, he was everything—and his family was everything to him.

He will be missed beyond words, remembered in countless cherished moments, and loved always.

For those who want to celebrate Chester's life, there will be a gathering at Herma & Chester's house on Friday, April 17th at 2pm. We will barbecue, all are welcome to bring a side dish or drink to share.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR 17. 2:00 PM (MT)

Contact for Info

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Tribute Wall

JM

“ Herma.....just read about your husbands passing. So sorry to hear that; losing a loved one after so many years is not easy, but it does get better with time. Dick & I missed our 60th anniversary by 4 months; he's been gone a year & 9 months on May 5th. Still feels like just recently, I knew it was coming but came much quicker than I anticipated. Things have really changed now. At least you have your kids for you & I hope close by. Just wanted to send my condolences to you, life does go on and will get better with time; one thing that can't be taken away are our memories with them. Stay strong, but grieving it okay. I went to a few of the hospice group grievance meetings, but couldn't get from it what I was needing. Take Care, God will hold you up, he's my Refuge for sure!! Love ❤️ & Prayers 🙏 to you during your life changing experience.

Jan Mitsch

Jan Mitsch - April 29 at 11:51 PM

LE

“ Unfortunately, I didn't meet Chester very often. My first memory of him was sometime in the late eighties or early nineties. Krista, me and our three daughters were camping near Denekamp in the Netherlands. Herma and Chester visited us there. They were a couple in love. For Herma, the campsite and the surrounding area were a place full of childhood memories that she had to share with Chester.

In March 2010, the entire Ornes family stayed at our home. We went on several sightseeing trips, and Opa De Witt organized a stay of a few days in the south of the province Limburg. During that period, I finally got to know Chester a little bit better. I remember him as a quiet, amiable, and modest man. But above all, as a very talented father, attentive to the needs of Laura, John, and Neal.

Lex Eggink, brother in law



Lex Eggink - April 15 at 05:29 AM

BW

“ To me, as his Dutch sister-in-law, Chester is an example of a genuine family man offering love and stability to Herma. his children and grandchildren.
I wish all who love him lots of strength for the coming time ❤️
Barbara de Witt-Caspers

Barbara de Witt - April 10 at 06:17 PM