



## Ernest Gilbert Wolff

August 7, 1934 - September 24, 2018

Dr. Ernest Gilbert Wolff died peacefully in his home in Corvallis, Oregon on Monday September 24th at 4:14pm, at the age of 84. He was surrounded by his loving wife, children, and grandchildren.

Ernest was born on August 7th, 1934 in Lichtefelde, Germany to Walter Minden and Margarete Alvina Wolff. He had one sister, Evelyn Smith. His family moved to Bronxville, New York in 1940. Ernest attended Iona Preparatory School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (class of 1954), and Imperial College in London (Royal School of Mines). It was in London that he met the love of his life, Penelope Anne Hayes. They married in 1961 after Ernest spent a year in Borlänge, Sweden working as a Metallurgist. Ernest and Penelope were blessed with seven children: Christopher Charles (1962) Nicholas Michael (1963) Alice Lindsay (1964) Antonia Juliet (1965) Stephanie Jane (1968) Victoria Anne (1974) and Jessica Maria (1981). They have fourteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Ernest was a brilliant materials scientist. He worked in Nigeria, West Africa for UNESCO, Aerospace Corporation in Los Angeles California, and in 1988 he moved his family to Oregon where he was a professor at Oregon State University until 1991 when he started his own materials testing company, Precision Measurements and Instruments Corporation.

Ernest loved adventure, travel, art, culture, coin and stamp collecting, tennis, skiing, soccer, badminton, opening mail and donating to charitable causes including support for American Indian tribes and nature conservancies. He was an accomplished pianist, played guitar, was deeply fond of Mexican Mariachi music, and even played the triangle in a symphonic performance directed by Aaron Copland. He loved snow. His eye for beauty was grand in scope and his thirst for knowledge was paralleled only by his categorically reliable memory. He had a near photographic memory for maps and names of places in the world he had been. He and Penelope traveled every year, and this last year he enjoyed trips to New York City, Germany, France, Wales, Italy and England. He performed his last piano concerto by Walter Leigh this past June, and he won his last tennis match along-side his partner Henry Lee a week before the stroke. He never wasted time unless intentionally and was a firm believer in occasionally doing “nothing”.

The Memorial Service is to be held Sunday, September 30th at 2:00 pm, at Corvallis Country Club. Refreshments will be served immediately following.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

SEP **30**. 2:00 PM (PT)

Corvallis Club  
1850 SW Whiteside Dr.  
Corvallis, OR 97333

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ It was always so good to have both Penny and Ernest working with the chamber orchestra. Ernest was always so patient with Penny's corrections and instructions. He will be missed in so many ways. I am so blessed to have had a music relationship with those two very special friends.

*Pam Sorensen*

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**Pam Sorensen** - September 30, 2018 at 02:57 PM

BW

“ I had the pleasure of working with Ernest at OSU. He and I joined the Mechanical Engineering program at the same time, Ernest as the senior faculty member and me as a young new-start professor. One of the things I learned from Ernest was his absolute confidence in being able to solve any research problem, complete any measurement. The highlight I remember is when he responded to a proposal request for measuring the mechanical properties of solid nitrogen. He wrote the proposal, got the award, and then told me "now I have to figure out how to measure solid nitrogen!" The fact that no-one was too sure how to make and hold onto solid nitrogen in the lab, much less make property measurements of it, was not a critical issue for him. He was fearless, and leaped ahead when (most) others would say it was too hard. The project was a success and provided critical information that is still being used in designing cryogenically cooled satellite and aerospace components. A real inspiration to a younger faculty colleague.

*Here's to a life well lived. Ernest will be missed. Sincerely, Bill Warnes*

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**Bill Warnes** - September 28, 2018 at 06:12 PM



*Thank you for your words Bill, I love to hear about his fearlessness and gusto. As his daughter I can attest to his adventurous spirit!*

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**Victoria Wolff-Zevallos** - April 23, 2020 at 09:55 PM