



## Robert David Hornbaker

January 6, 1926 - June 18, 2017

Robert David Hornbaker, 91, of Los Angeles, California, died Monday, June 18, 2017, at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center from complications from pancreatic cancer.

Robert was born in rural Bonaparte, Iowa (Vernon Township) on January 6, 1926 to Phil S. Hornbaker and Mary Agnew Hornbaker. He was named after his great grandfathers Robert Agnew and David Roten Hornbaker. He was the oldest of three children and was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Norma Hornbaker; and his brother, Dean Hornbaker. Robert is survived by his wife of 42 years, Nobuko Fujita Hornbaker. He is also survived by his niece, Lea Ann Hornbaker Keller and husband Robert of Culpeper, Virginia; nephew, Michael Hornbaker and wife April of Rockwall, Texas; niece, Mary Hornbaker Benton and husband John of Fair Oaks, California; and niece, Julia Hornbaker Malloy and husband Dan of Camdenton, Missouri; ten great nieces and nephews; eight great-great nieces and nephews; and, his beloved dogs JoJo and Vivian. Robert was raised in rural Van Buren County, Iowa and attended the Vernon Prairie and Ward one-room school from 1931 to 1939. He graduated from Bonaparte High School in 1943. That same year he tried to enlist in the Army Air Corp, but he was underage (17) and his parents would not sign a waiver. He instead left home to attend Iowa State College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (now Iowa State University), where he worked at various jobs to pay for his college tuition and expenses, lived on a basement cot, and was still able to graduate with an Electrical Engineering degree (B.S.E.E) in 1946, with the highest scholastic record of any graduate. During his time at Iowa State College, he joined the Navy's V-12 Officer Training program and was discharged as an Ensign in 1946, having completed his training. He then attended the University of Iowa School of Law and later received a Juris Doctor (J.D.) in 1949. He moved to New York and worked as a Patent Attorney with General Electric in Schenectady, N.Y. He later decided to move to New York City to attend Columbia Law School, where he received a Master of Laws (LLM) in 1951. Upon graduation, the famous New York City law firm, Cahill, Gordon and Reindel, hired Robert to work in their patent law practice. While at the firm, he worked on the precedent-setting US Supreme Court case, *Graver Tank & Mfg. Co. v. Linde Air Products*, a controversial case concerning patent infringement where the court established when the doctrine of equivalents should be applied. At the end of 1951, the United States Navy

inducted Robert into active duty. He was initially stationed in San Bruno, California, but eventually served on a ship and was stationed in Guam for all of 1953. After release from the Navy, Robert returned to Cahill, Gordon and Reindel and was assigned to their San Francisco office to work on the International Oil Cartel case, on behalf of his client, Standard Oil of California. He resided in California ever since. He became an Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) in Los Angeles from 1958-60, where he prosecuted over 50 federal criminal cases, many before juries. After the U.S. Attorney's Office, he worked for Lyon & Lyon, the largest patent firm west of Chicago and later became a partner with Thomas P. Mahoney. In 1974, Robert joined other partners to form the firm Freilich, Hornbaker, and Rosen of West Los Angeles, where Robert worked for the next 40 years as a patent lawyer. Robert was a member of the Los Angeles Athletic Club for over 50 years, and known as someone who exercised regularly and maintained a healthy diet. Prior to his illness, Robert could still wear his officer uniform from the Navy. Up until just recently, Robert maintained two classic Porsches and over the years would thrill his nephew, nieces and eventually their children, with exuberant drives around the streets and freeways of Los Angeles. He returned to his family farm near Bonaparte, Iowa, each year, and would spend his time reconnecting with family and friends. Robert recently published books pertaining to his experience attending the Vernon Prairie one-room school and a family history book documenting the Hornbaker family. Copies of both books were donated to the Keosauqua Library's Genealogy Room. Robert's remains will be cremated and his ashes interned separately at Thompson Cemetery, near his boyhood farm in Iowa, and in the family cemetery of his wife, Nobuko, in Kurashiki, Japan. In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to support UCLA. Please make checks payable to "The UCLA Foundation" and mail to UCLA Health Sciences Development, Attn: Kelsie Sandoval, 10945 Le Conte Avenue, Ste. 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095. Feel free to contact Kelsie Sandoval at (310) 206-7360 or [ksandoval@support.ucla.edu](mailto:ksandoval@support.ucla.edu) with any questions. UCLA Foundation=== Mail to: UCLA Health Sciences Development, Attn: Kelsie Sandoval 10945 Le Conte Avenue Ste. 3132, Los Angeles CA 90095 Tel: 1-310-206-7360 Email: [ksandoval@support.ucla.edu](mailto:ksandoval@support.ucla.edu)

# Comments

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“ I was so sorry to hear of Robert's death. I knew his whole family having grown up in Bonaparte. When he was around 17 and I was 10 he would tease me and call me his little girlfriend. We reconnected on email a few years ago. Later I tried to contact him to join our Bonaparte Facebook as he could have added so much to it but I got no response. I'm one the oldest in the group and live in PA. I shared his obituary with my son in law, also a patent attorney and he was very impressed with Robert's life accomplishments. Quite a guy! My condolences. Pat

**Patricia Osweiler Benjamin** - August 21, 2017 at 10:11 AM