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## WALTER HOYT JOHNSON

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Walter Hoyt Johnson

Loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather Walter Hoyt Johnson, 87, passed away on Dec. 24.

Born in Fullerton, CA to parents Carl and Amber Johnson, Walt along with his older sister Florajean spent 10 years in Fullerton before moving to Avenal, CA where his father worked in the oil industry. Walt worked summers in the oilfields with his Dad who was a drilling foreman for Standard Oil. After the untimely death of his mother, Walt's father Carl met and married Ann Hofstedt who had two children of her own, Daurese and Jim.

Following his graduation from Avenal High School, Walt attended USC where he hoped to play baseball. His time at USC was short and after one semester he transferred to Fullerton College where he played football and basketball. After completing a semester there, Walt moved on to San Jose State where he played nearly every position in baseball until he was named the permanent catcher for the team. He caught the eye of a scout for the Boston Red Sox and signed with the team in 1952. He eventually returned to San Jose to begin graduate school and reconnected with the love of his life before enlisting in the Marines.

Walt met Hazel in 1950 but they did not begin dating until the next year. Ultimately they married in 1953 in Santa Ana and stayed in the area until Walt's work as a teacher and coach took them to the Central Valley. They settled in a variety of small towns like Avenal, Shafter, and Coalinga where they made many long-lasting friendships that remained until he died. In 1967 Walt and Hazel finally settled in Bakersfield where he spent more than 15 years as a coach and nearly a decade as athletic director at Bakersfield College. His time at BC helped shape and influence the lives of countless student athletes.

Walt was known as a kind gentleman and man of God. Of all his accomplishments his faith and his family were most important to him.

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Walt was preceded in death by his parents, wife Hazel, sister Florajean Henderson and brother Jim Hofstedt. He is survived by his sister Daurese Caldwell, children Mike Johnson (Sharla), Caryl Witcher (Bob), Lisa David (Keith), Michele Newell (Scott), 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Special thanks to Walt's church family for their support and Dr. William Baker and his staff who diligently cared for Walt throughout his life. Dr. Baker's care for Walt allowed him to sustain a quality of life that lasted until he was called home to Jesus.

A celebration of life will be held on January 27, at 2 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 1705 - 17th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301. A reception for all attendees immediately following. In-lieu of flowers please direct donations to the Missions program of First Presbyterian Church or Hoffmann Hospice, 8501 Brimhall Rd., Bldg 100, Bakersfield, CA 93312.

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