

Merritt Bradley Jensen

January 2, 1918 - October 22, 2021

Below you'll find the live-stream link for Saturday's service in which we'll remember and celebrate Merritt. The service begins at 10am PDT, and though the link takes you to a Facebook page, you need not have a Facebook account to participate. Simply wait for the live-stream to begin at 10am.

link to live-stream, available at 10am PDT on Saturday, April 23
www.heartofcorvallis.org/livestream

Merritt Jensen passed away peacefully in his sleep at Mennonite Village the morning of October 22, just a few months prior to his 104th birthday.

Born in Brookston, Indiana on January 2, 1918, he was the second child of six to Danish immigrant Carl Edvard and Lola Catherine Anderson. The growing family moved to Avoca, Iowa where Merritt grew up on the family farm and attended school. During his formative years, he assisted his father collecting cream from the local dairies. In school, he was active in sports where he was a standout football and basketball player. After high school, he began his college career at the University of Nebraska Omaha and later transferred to Peru State Teachers College in Peru, Nebraska where he was involved in student government as well as athletics. While at Peru State, he met his future wife, Mary Elizabeth Collin. They were married on June 8, 1941. He

graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Office Management and Coaching. He later completed his Master's in Educational Administration from University of Iowa.

World War II changed the trajectory of many people living in that era. He and two of his brothers all served in different branches of the military. The US Army brought Merritt and Mary Beth to Corvallis where Merritt was stationed at Camp Adair for training, prior to being deployed to Europe for the final years of the War. They fell in love with Corvallis and the Willamette Valley, and promised that they would someday return.

After the War, he worked as a public high school business teacher and coach, and then went on to become a high school principal in the following cities: Bassett, Nebraska; Carroll, Iowa; Fort Madison, Iowa; and finally to Cheyenne, Wyoming. He was always looking for new adventures that would further his career and enrich his life. After 5 years as principal at Cheyenne High School, the city built a new high school to accommodate the growing student population and he accepted the challenge of starting the new school, Cheyenne East High (EHS), from the ground up. While at East, he served on the board of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). As one of three steering committee members, he was asked to perform an evaluation of overseas schools for the US Military. The evaluation trip covered American schools in the following countries: England, Spain, Morocco, Ethiopia, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, and Germany.

After 13 years of guiding EHS, he took the position of Director of Secondary Education for the Laramie County School District in Cheyenne. Also while in Cheyenne, Merritt was an active member of First Baptist Church and served on the board of directors for Salvation Army. A new job possibility provided an opportunity for another great overseas adventure; he accepted the position as Principal at Taipei American School in Taiwan. This provided for travels to

Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines, and Indonesia. His time in Taiwan led to another position in Asia as the Headmaster of Nagoya International School in Nagoya, Japan where he served for 6 years until his retirement. While in Japan, he and his wife took an around-the-world trip to visit family and friends across the globe.

After he retired, they moved back to the US in 1983 and initially settled in Pullman, Washington where his son was obtaining his undergraduate degree and his daughter was earning her teaching certificate, both at Washington State University. This also provided the opportunity for the new Grandpa to spend time with his twin grandsons. In 1987, he took the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream of moving back to Corvallis near where his grandchildren had also relocated.

For the majority of his adult life, he was significantly involved in Rotary where he assisted with numerous projects over the years. While in Pullman, he was elected District Governor for Eastern Washington and Southern British Columbia. He traveled widely to meet with as many local groups as possible during his tenure. He stayed active in the Corvallis chapter until he was in his late 80s.

In Corvallis, he volunteered with the Urban Forestry Program for tree planting projects with the Parks and Recreation Department, and took Master Gardener classes. He was also a very active member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) working on numerous committees and projects to help serve the Corvallis community. He also served as an Ambassador for City of Corvallis Chamber of Commerce. Over the years, he became the Oregon State University Super Fan for the Women's Basketball and Volleyball programs. He would attend all the practices and games and sent the teams off on their road trips with cheers from the parking lot. He reveled in getting to

know all the players, coaches and family members over the years. Former team members regularly kept in touch after graduation.

Over the years, his kindness, generosity and ability to find good in everyone endeared him to all whom he met. No matter the situation, he was always able to make people at ease and bring them a smile with the stunning sense of humor that he kept until the end. He inspired many and will be remembered with fond smiles.

He is survived by daughter Jennyan Jensen of Lacey, Washington; son Merrill and daughter-in-law Kelly of Corvallis; grandsons and families Hans, Kirsten, Freya, and Maggie Jensen of Barrington, Rhode Island; and Christian, Daniele, and Dresden Jensen of San Antonio, Texas. A memorial service will take place at First Christian Church (DoC) in Corvallis on April 23. The memorial Service will be available both in person and on live stream. Come back to this page for updates and the live- stream link on or about April 21, 2022. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the following organizations: your local hospice provider, First Christian Church (DoC) of Corvallis, or the Oregon State Women's Basketball Rebounders Club. DeMoss-Durdan Funeral Home is handling arrangements. www.demossturda.com

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **23**. 10:00 AM (PT)

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
602 SW Madison Ave
Corvallis, OR 97333

Tribute Wall

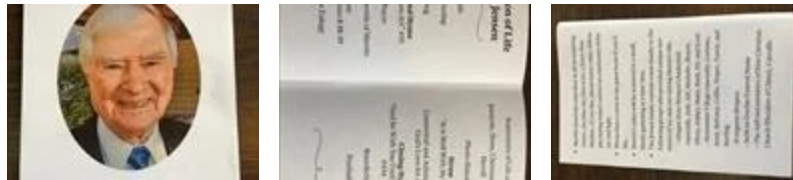
MJ

“ *A beautiful and perfect memorial service for Uncle Merritt's life. Thank you for the on line access. Love to Uncle Merritt MJ Jensen & Charley Delve*

MJ Jensen - April 23, 2022 at 02:29 PM

MJ

“ *Today's order of service*



Merrill Jensen - April 23, 2022 at 12:08 PM

BB

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Barbara Bang - April 22, 2022 at 11:03 AM

JF

“ Merritt Jensen was a People Person in the true sense of the term. He had an amazing ability to remember a person and put a name with the face. When I attended Cheyenne (Wyo) Senior High School where he was the principal, he always greeted me with a smile and addressed me by name when he saw me in the hall or at after-school events. I mistakenly assumed then that knowing students' names was just part of his job as principal. I moved from Cheyenne after attending college but returned in 1969 for my 10-year class reunion. I saw him there and was surprised when he addressed me by name at the reception -- before I had even registered or picked up my name tag. Decades later, I moved to Corvallis after I retired because my sister and her husband live here and, like the Jensens, I had enjoyed the area when I visited Oregon. When I read the newspaper article about Merritt Jensen and his connection with the OSU volleyball teams that appeared a number of years ago, I was surprised to see that I was once again residing in the same town as he but not surprised to read of his involvement with the interests and activities of young people and their admiration for him. Obviously, his interest in people far exceeded his ability to remember their names and most likely had much to do with his living such a long and productive life.

Janice Fritz

Janice K Fritz - April 10, 2022 at 03:57 AM

JG

“ Mr. Jensen was one of the kindest, most even keeled man I've known. Knew him both @ East HS and we were members of the same church. He will be missed by those who knew him, and a loss for those who never will.

John Goudie - April 07, 2022 at 10:47 PM

DG

“ *My mind is inside Eat High right now seeing all the different colored lockers and seeing your dad walk the halls and stopping in classrooms to say hi!* ”

Dave Gustafson - April 07, 2022 at 11:26 AM

MJ

“ *42 files added to the album Life and Times of Merritt* ”



Merrill Jensen - April 03, 2022 at 04:34 PM

MJ

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall* ”



MJ Jensen - March 09, 2022 at 11:06 AM

MJ

My Uncle Merritt was my hero, my shining light, the person who taught me how to network and enjoy every day to the fullest. My husband, Charley Delve and I had so many memories on our trips up to see Uncle Merritt from our home in Tucson, Arizona. Uncle Merritt made us laugh from the moment we walked in his door until we had to say our goodbyes. We are so grateful that we had many fun times together. It is never easy to say a final goodbye to a man that helped shape me into the person I am today. We love you, Uncle Merritt! You will never be forgotten.

Mary Jane "MJ" Jensen & Charley Delve

MJ Jensen - March 09, 2022 at 11:11 AM

AB

“*I've known Pa (Merritt) for 45 years. One of my fondest memories I have of him is he always introduced me as the mother of the twins — his grandsons. Pa was a kind and gentle man. He was wise and smart. Pa lived an amazing life and I am blessed I got to be a part of his journey. Know your are missed, love Annie (as he called me)* 🌸

Anne Giacalone Baker - February 28, 2022 at 01:04 PM