

VerLyn "Sonny" Jensen

1939 - 2022



BORN

1939

DIED

2022

ABOUT

[Riverside Poly High School](#)
[University of California | Berkeley](#)

VERLYN JENSEN OBITUARY

October 31, 1939 - October 12, 2022

VerLyn NaDell Jensen of North Tustin, known to all as Sonny, passed away on October 12, 2022, at age 82 from the effects of Alzheimer's disease. The longtime attorney and philanthropist was born October 31, 1939, in Reno, Nev., to Evelyn (nee Mitchell) and NaDell Jensen. (Sonny loved mentioning that he was a "Halloween baby" and was known for passing out full-size chocolate bars to trick-or-treaters.) The family moved to Riverside, and Sonny was soon joined by sisters Sandra Lyn and JoLyn. He was a good student and an outgoing fellow, making lifelong friends in elementary school, junior high, and Riverside Poly High School. He loved his years at Poly, where he played center on the football team. His buddies and teammates continued to get together annually to trade old war stories. One of his childhood acquaintances grew to be more than a friend: He and Diane Hamilton met in eighth grade; they became sweethearts in high school and married on Oct. 5, 1958. Sonny graduated from UC Riverside with a degree in economics, and graduated from Berkeley Law then known as Boalt Hall at UC Berkeley - in 1964. After graduation, Sonny considered several job offers; he decided to go with Rutan & Tucker in Orange County, and so began a long and busy legal

career of nearly 60 years. His career took him to several other large firms in Orange County, as well as private practice. He established a law firm in Newport Beach with his eldest son, Jeff: Jensen & Jensen, LLP. He also served as legal counsel to Congressman Jerry Patterson in Washington, D.C., for one year, producing a congressional report. While his career kept him busy, he loved nothing more than spending time with his family: sons Jeff, Bryan and Jay, and daughter Melinda. He loved taking the family hiking in the Sierras and throughout the West; deep-sea fishing in Baja was another treasured memory. He was a man of many interests and for years read four newspapers a day. He loved baseball, specifically the Pittsburgh Pirates and Roberto Clemente, but he loved the local teams as well. He felt fortunate to be one of the few fans who attended two of baseball's great World Series moments - the 1988 walk-off home run at Dodger Stadium by Kirk Gibson and the 2002 home run by Scott Spiezio that ignited an Angels' title. "Spiezio's home run you will remember forever," he once said. "But Gibson's? That was otherworldly." He loved people. He took great interest in everybody's story and was always eager to lend a hand to anyone in need. He had a philanthropic heart. He founded the Boys & Girls Club of Tustin when he saw that the kids in the city had no such program. Through his men's group, the Noble Vikings of Orange County, he spearheaded a Christmas program to feed needy families; that program has been continuously going for more than 25 years. He was a die-hard Democrat, (which stemmed from his admiration for Harry S. Truman, who had appointed his father as postmaster of Riverside) and supported many candidates and causes. He was also a 12-year member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and proudly mentored many through that program. But he was most proud of his children and grandchildren and delighted in their many adventures and accomplishments. Though he liked to call himself "just an old country lawyer from Riverside," he was much more than that: intelligent, humorous, curious, loyal, sometimes cantankerous, with an unmatched zest for life. He was truly one of a kind and will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Diane; children Melinda Centner and Jay Jensen; grandchildren Jeni, Carey, Max, Kathleen, Erin, Ayden and Evan; great-grandson Jackson; sisters Sandra and JoLyn, and many nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by beloved sons Jeff and Bryan Jensen. Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Boys & Girls Club of Tustin, 580 W. Sixth St., Tustin, CA 92780.

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