



Walter Franklin Hughes

January 27, 1922 - April 26, 2020

Walter Franklin Hughes died on April 26th 2020 in Keaa'u, Hawaii, at the age of 98 years. He is survived by sons Robert (Joann) Hughes of Boise, Idaho, Thomas (Vicki) Hughes of Pasco, Washington; daughter, Patricia (Eddie) Macomber of Keaaau, Hawaii; brother Leroy Hughes of San Diego, California; four grandchildren and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family. The family requests that you do not send flowers or other monetary donations. Comments or thoughts can be shared on this website.

Walter F. Hughes was born on January 27th 1922 at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, CA to Willis Merwin Hughes and Minnie Ellen Doty Hughes.

Walt's early years were spent on a small Southern California farm, near Goleta, surrounded by family. He was the second oldest of 5, with one older brother, two younger brothers and a baby sister completing the group. His early years were filled with hard work and scarcity due to the great depression. However, being a farm family, there was always food on the table and things to keep him busy. Because of the reliance of the family diet on local produce and forage, he did develop a lifetime aversion to mustard greens. The family always had animals and Walt and his brothers established a dairy herd at the Elwood Ranch in Goleta. The dairy herd provided a consistent source of income for the family, and was intended to fund the brothers' college educations. Walt had a favorite story about the trials and

tribulations of dairy farming. It turns out the herd got into silage that had gotten wet and fermented. The cows drank the fermented corn liquor.

Walt loved telling the story about drunken cows stumbling all over the farm, bellowing all night long. However getting drunken cows back into the parlor to be milked was a whole different story, and their milk production was off for several days. His work with the dairy eventually led to him becoming one of the first four Diamond All-Stars in California 4-H.

His father brought home a retired Forest Service work horse named Napoleon who hauled a whole cabin; one load at a time into the Los Padres National Forest, where it was erected on a site next to the Santa Cruz Creek on a 99 year lease. The Santa Cruz cabin would become Walt's favorite spot in the world, and he continued hiking into it with family members well into his 90s. Napoleon also would play a major part in Walt's life in another very important way. He had an infection that spread from his mouth along the side of his face that ended up creating a large abscess. Walt helped his dad clean and treat the wound rather than put down the horse. It took months, but Napoleon recovered and left Walt with a vocation for his life, as this is when he decided to become a Veterinarian.

The money from the dairy provided Walt with the means to get into UC Davis in 1940. He was in his dormitory room the following December, when he heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Shortly thereafter, a Japanese submarine shelled the on-shore oil field west of Goleta. Some of the shells landed within a hundred yards of the pasture where his dairy cows were grazing. He was already a member of ROTC and he knew he wanted to fly. So he went to the Navy recruiting office and they told him that since his front teeth didn't close perfectly together, he couldn't use them to pinch off an oxygen tube. So he wouldn't be eligible to become a Navy pilot. Not letting that sway his ambition, he went down to the Army and they had no such standard, so

the Army Air Corps it was. He passed all his flight training and was assigned to pilot multi engine bombers, and was trained to Fly B-24s. He was sent to England and completed his 35 required missions in the 8th Air Force, the unit that had the highest casualty rate of any American force in the war. He was wounded once, and his copilot and best friend was killed alongside him, but he always brought the plane back to base. After the War, Walt returned to California, and married the sweetheart he met at March Field, California, a beautiful east coast extroverted urbanite WAC named Violet Sasso. Evidently opposites do attract. Returning to Davis after the war, Walt graduated with bachelor's degrees in Animal Husbandry and Agronomy with enough credits for a third degree in Chemistry, while Violet took classes but did not graduate. Violet got busy with a family while Walt enrolled in the first class of the new Veterinary College at UCD when it opened in 1948. Walt made extra money working as a tech in the Poultry Science department. While in vet school, Walt collaborated on studies of viral diseases in poultry after being inspired by his advising professor. After graduating at the top of the class as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, DVM, Walt started to practice, first doing a general veterinary medical residency in Lancaster CA, and then moving to Petaluma, CA, to take on his first professional job working with poultry. Petaluma, at the time, was known as the egg capital of the world. After two years in Petaluma, his research at Davis and his reputation at flock management caught the attention of Kimber Farms, one of the nation's largest breeders of laying chickens, which was located in Niles, CA. They offered him a position as chief epidemiologist, pathologist, and research director. He packed up the family and moved to Niles. His career there included many highlights including creating special eggs that were used in the space program to test moon rock samples. He was one of the first scientists in any discipline to show a correlation between certain cancers and viruses. He was the first to develop a vaccine that prevented Marek's Lymphoma, a devastating form of lymph cell cancer that was a serious threat to the world's egg supply in the 1960's. That

vaccine has been used worldwide to prevent Marek's. He refined vaccines and developed treatment protocols for Newcastle disease and viral velogenic Newcastle disease, two neurological viruses that were serious threats to the flocks worldwide. He also developed the protocols for producing the germ-free eggs that most vaccines are grown in. Everyone whose life has been extended because of being vaccinated for anything over the last 50 years carries his work with them. After Kimber's he worked for a nationwide egg producer/distributor out of Southern CA until his retirement.

In Niles, Walt was active in the community. He was a member of the Rotary club that met weekly at the International Kitchen, a five star restaurant that has unfortunately given way to urban development. He was a member of the Niles Elementary School Board, and from that position, helped create the Fremont Unified School District that combined five elementary districts and the regional high school district into a city-wide unified K-12 school district. He served for several years as president of the Fremont Unified School Board. He was so respected that he almost never faced opposition at the polls. Even though many people disagreed with him on policy, even those who did, acknowledged that he was fair, and genuinely listened to all sides. He once said that the hardest decision he had to make as a Board member was to uphold the expulsion of a young man from MSJ High School. He knew that the Principal who demanded the expulsion was an incompetent, tenured, petty tyrant. And he knew that the young man who had mooned the Principal from a car was expressing what 95% of the students felt. He felt bound by the rules to uphold the expulsion. But, he was very gratified in later years to learn that the young man involved had gone on to graduate from college, lead a successful life, and become a pillar of the community. He cared about every student in the system, and took pains to follow that one student, among many others.

Walt always gardened wherever he lived. One house included a half-acre

vegetable garden and over 20 varieties of fruit trees. In his Cuenca Ct. home, where he and the family moved in 1966, he planted a large garden, and trees that included plums, peaches, apricots, figs, oranges, lemons and avocados. The redwoods he planted out front as seedlings are now over 50 feet tall. He accidentally developed a hybrid form of zucchini in his compost pile that he planted year after year. It was delicious, but there was such an abundance of squash in the summer, that the neighbors grew quite wary when his kids pulled wagon loads of the stuff through the neighborhood to give away.

Walt, together with Violet, were active supporters of the Children's Hospital of the East Bay. Vi twisted his arm into being her partner in a Bridge league that raised funds for the hospital. Walt was an extremely competent card player, but Vi was an absolute terror at the tables. On more than one occasion, they played in the annual championship final tournament, and they won it at least once. They had a psychic connection... they always knew almost precisely what the other held. It probably wasn't fair, but no one would have believed in psychic connections anyway.

Walt's great love was the outdoors. He took his family camping and backpacking at least once a summer, and took as many other kids as his own would invite. Many people got their first taste of camping by going on one of Walt's excursions into the mountains.

As a scientist of international reputation, Walt drew people from many other countries to Niles. Whenever possible, Walt had them stay in the family home. One scientist from Chile lived with the family for a year, and another from Spain stayed with them for several months. Visitors came from Japan, Poland, the Netherlands, England, Brazil and Mexico to learn flock management and disease control techniques. He took great pride in connecting those visitors with life in his small town.

Although he was a world-renowned poultry scientist, he was first and foremost

a veterinarian. If an animal was hurt, the neighborhood kids always brought it to Doc Walt, and he never turned them away. Taking care of animals, and caring for their owners, was a lifelong avocation. Well into his 60s, he would do pregnancy checks on a friend's cattle ranch in exchange for hiking and hunting privileges.

Many people in the Bay Area first met Walt as a guest docent for the Collings Foundation, which brought some of the last flying B-24 and B-17 aircraft to several sites around the Bay each spring. He did that for 27 years. From 2004 until 2018, he flew from Hawaii to Livermore to take part in the annual Memorial Day visit by the bombers. It was a delight for him to dress in his original dress uniform (which still fit), and tour people through the planes, telling them about his experiences, and selling his memoir of the war. He made many friends over the 25 or so years that he and Vi supported the tour.

After Walt retired in stages, beginning about 1986, he and Vi lived in Niles until 2003, when it became difficult to maintain the large family home. They moved to Hawaii to be close to their daughter Trish, and to enjoy a little bit more laid back lifestyle. His beloved Violet passed away surrounded by family on March 28th 2008, which left a hole that was patched but never filled. He spent his time showing friends and family around the island, maintained a large tropical garden, a hydroponic garden, was a tai chi devotee and writer of scientific papers concerning physics and cosmology. He was also famous with friends for his tropical fruit jams and home grown banana bread. He never lost his interest in the way things work, and lived his life until the very end. He said once that the reason he was never lost and could see things others couldn't was because "I Can Fly". He literally could - in his mind, no need for an airplane or drone. He's flying now with Violet by his side, soaring free in the universe at last.

Tribute Wall

DV

“ *Dear Trish and Family*

I certainly didn't know Walter for very long, but as I found out at his 98th Birthday luncheon, it was you who 25 years ago had provided so much knowledge on water catchment systems, as I had often phoned the Dept.of Water here on the Big Island for information needed with my new move from Oahu to here...

Walter had a kind, knowing eye for seeing what people needed, or needed to learn or hear."Always be mindful" he told me at one of my first Tai Chi classes. I know he lived and followed those words in all aspects of his life.

I didn't know that Sunday morning of the 26th that Walter would pass that day, as he and your family were in my prayers and my daily Reflection reading said "Always be mindful of this scripture." I will Walter. I promise.

With Grateful Aloha

Diana Veach

Diana Veach - May 11, 2020 at 05:38 PM

MW

“ *Walt and I started Tai Chi at the same time and for a time we were always next to each other in the front row. Then I moved behind him at the right end of the 2nd row. We both had birthdays in January, which also include 2 other older members of the class. We called ourselves the "oldies club." When he shared copies of his book, recounting his experiences in WWII, it gave us a unique view of the war not covered in history books. He was a lovely, gracious man and will be missed by all who knew him.*

Maile Moulds-Carr, nee Waipa

Maile Moulds-Carr, nee Waipa - May 10, 2020 at 12:59 PM

VI

“ So happy to have known Walter. Such an awesome soul. Vickie
(from Tai Chi class)

Vickie - May 09, 2020 at 06:55 PM

JG

“ The first evening that your family hosted several attendees of a rainwater conference at your house in Hilo, we experienced an earthquake. And later a lava flow subsumed several neighborhoods and natural areas. You dad quietly tended to his garden the day after the earthquake, the foundation of constancy and calm in a storm of extraordinary events. Sorry for your loss, Trisha. From the other tributes, it was apparent was a highly respected man and veteran .

Jan Gerston - May 09, 2020 at 03:08 PM

BC

“ What a special treat it was to know Walter and to develop a friendship with him. I thought of Walter as a kind of mystic; mostly because of his interest in cosmology and his explanations of Tai Chi movement. Walter knew how to soar outside of his body and I know that when we meet again for Tai Chi classes he will be present with us still. Walter introduced me to the concept of hydroponics and I thoroughly enjoyed his tour of his garden and fruit trees. He had a special fondness for lemon bars and I loved making them for him because they brought him such pleasure. I will miss his hugs and clever quips. Blessed be, my good friend; soar high until we meet again. Barbara Cigainero

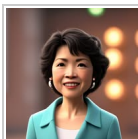
Barbara Cigainero - May 09, 2020 at 01:35 PM

MA

“ 1 file added to the album *Walter Franklin Hughes*



macomber - May 09, 2020 at 02:43 AM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Pam Kawashima - May 08, 2020 at 07:29 PM

NM

“ We had the great luck to move into a house next door to Walter and Violet. They became honorary grandparents to our kids, Matthew and Bridget, who never thought twice about running next door and inviting themselves in, always for cookies, home-dried fruit, fresh fruit from their trees, and love. Walt taught our son to ride a 2-wheeler when the girls down the street decided to take the training wheels off one afternoon. We loved talking to him about his WWII experiences (and read his book), family, his amazing backyard fruit trees, and his experiences at Kimber Farms. After he and Vi moved to Hawaii, we tried to continue seeing him every Memorial Day at the Livermore Airfield. Walt was an American hero and also a terrific human being and friend. We cherish our time with him and will miss him.



Nina Moore - May 07, 2020 at 02:17 PM

RB

“ Wanda & I loved Walt dearly. He was a treasure, someone we admired greatly and whom we'll miss. There are too many good memories to recount in this short space, but I'd certainly like to sit down with him again and eat a raisin rock.

Wanda & Ron Bamberg

Ron Bamberg - May 07, 2020 at 11:43 AM

JT

“ A Tribute to Walter

When looking up words like “mentor” and “hero” in the thesaurus, you find additional descriptors like: coach, guide, exemplar, and superstar. Walter, ever humble, would be very uncomfortable thinking of himself as a superstar. But the rest of us lucky enough to have shared time and stories, physics and fitness with him cannot think of Walter with any other sentiment than awe.

It is difficult to fathom how many hearts Walter has touched during his 98 years on this planet. What a legacy of kindness, intelligence, dedication, and hard work! He truly is my hero, and I am not alone.

No matter what spiritual persuasion you have, I believe we can all agree that Walter has left only his physical body behind; he continues to live in our hearts and minds. Walter is now flying free, One with the radiant energy of the cosmos.

I would like to share the link to a song. During a recent communicate online, when I commented on Walter’s dance card always being full, the pleasant response was, “and it probably still is.” This is a delightful thought!

Upon hearing the sad news of Walter’s passing, my husband and I decided to hold each other while dancing. The next random song that played was, “We’ll Meet Again,” the WWII classic made popular by Vera Lynn in 1943. We both felt that this was clearly Walter’s message to us all. Sing along. Cry a little. Feel the love.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsM_VmN6ytk

The words are below.

I’m going to hold Walter to task on this- until we meet again, some sunny day.

*We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day*

*Keep smiling through
Just like you always do
'Till the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away*

*So will you please say hello
To the folks that I know
Tell them I won't be long
They'll be happy to know
That as you saw me go
I was singing this song*

*We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day
We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day*

*All our love,
Jane & DeWaine*



Jane Tollefsrud - May 06, 2020 at 07:48 PM

DC

“ I was privileged to meet Walter about 5 years ago at a Doty family reunion at Elwood Ranch in Goleta. My Mom was a Doty so I think Walter and I were 3rd cousins. Other than Arlene Doty, he was perhaps the only person there who had any recollection of my side of the family. I am a Vietnam Navy veteran and flew combat missions off the USS Ranger from 1968-70. Walter and I spent most of that day reminiscing about our mutual air wars some 25 years apart. I think he remembered more of what he experienced than I did. Later, I was able to read his book *A Bomber Pilot in WWII*. That only added to my already huge respect for him. We stayed in touch via email and most recently just before last Christmas. At that time he alerted me to some of his writings on *Neutron Crystals, Gravity and the Universe*. I thought it a huge compliment that he thought this would not be over my head. Most of it was but that was the Walt I knew for an all too brief period of time. Don't hold back, give it your all and don't ever assume other people are not as smart as you are. Rest in Peace Walter Hughes. See you again at Angels 30.

Don Christiansen

Don Christiansen - May 06, 2020 at 06:53 PM

PK

“ Walter and my father were second cousins---they shared a pair of grandparents. I first met Walter when he visited us in Grandview, Missouri. He gave me a copy of our family history, going back many, many years. The last time I saw Walter was when he and son Tom Hughes visited me in Hillsboro and we made a trip to the Evergreen Flight Museum in McMinnville. It was a very enjoyable day and one I'll always remember. He could name and tell stories about every plane in the museum. I gave each of my four children a copy of his book. He was a remarkable person and I am lucky to have known him.

Patricia Hughes Kemner - May 06, 2020 at 05:57 PM



“Dad and I are so sorry for your great loss. Walt was such an amazing man and I’m so honored to have met him. The only times I saw him was under the wing of “his” B-24 Bomber at the Livermore Airport during every Memorial Day event. He was always surrounded by friends, family and the adoring public as he autographed and sold his books. These pictures are from 2017 and show Wendell Peart, John Shirley (my Dad), and Walter, all WWII Veterans, all class mates from UC Davis’ first graduating class of Veterinarians and all wearing their uniforms. That was a special day for all of us to see these three friends together. It was Wendell’s idea to show up and surprise Walter. What a fun day that was!! We were able to meet all of Walters family which was so special ! We will miss him always.

Jean Otto and John Shirley



Jean Otto - May 05, 2020 at 11:36 PM

TC

“ I was extremely sad to here of Walter's passing. I met Walter when I was the Garrison Command Sergeant Major at Pohakuloa Training Area on Hawaii Island. The first time I met him was at the Hilo Veteran's Day parade in 2016. He was wearing his pinks and green uniform and fit in it like he was a current pilot. Talking to him and hearing his amazing stories was something that I will cherish for the rest of my life. After the parade, we hosted him at the Training area and let him observe a fighter pilot gunnery from one of the Observation Posts, and then let the Soldiers and Marines that were training up there meet him and talk story as well as meet some of our Apache Helicopter pilots and exchange stories of how it was back then to now. Walter was a true American and a true hero in many eyes. My condolences to his family with much regret that America lost a great person and hero.

Thomas E. Campbell
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major



Thomas Campbell - May 05, 2020 at 05:08 PM

JP

“ Sympathy to all your family,

I am so sorry for you loss, Even though I did not know Mr. Hughes after reading about him, I feel that I had known him for years. Your family did a beautiful writing on

Mr. Hughes. I was amazed at how it was written as his life was and all the thing he accomplished in his life. My family also grew up in Niles and they to had a very large veggie that would feed so many and also dairy cattle so my family I am sure knew your family. My dad was Clarence

May God bless Mr. Hughes and all his family.

*Sincerely,
Janice Pementel*

Janice Pementel - May 05, 2020 at 12:44 PM

GJ

“ Sorry to hear, but we knew it was coming. SO glad we were able to meet him when we came to Hawaii in 2018. Prayers for the family during this time.

Greg & Joyce Justice - May 05, 2020 at 06:13 AM

AJ

“ I am so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. I also am so sorry that I never got to meet him in person. He had been so faithful in contacting Boyd and even after he died he continued to call and check on me. I will never forget him and how proud he was of all his crew. I know the void in your heart will be forever, but we know he is in a better place. My thoughts and prayers are with you and all the family. May God bless you.

My love, Anita Justice

Anita Justice - May 05, 2020 at 12:52 AM

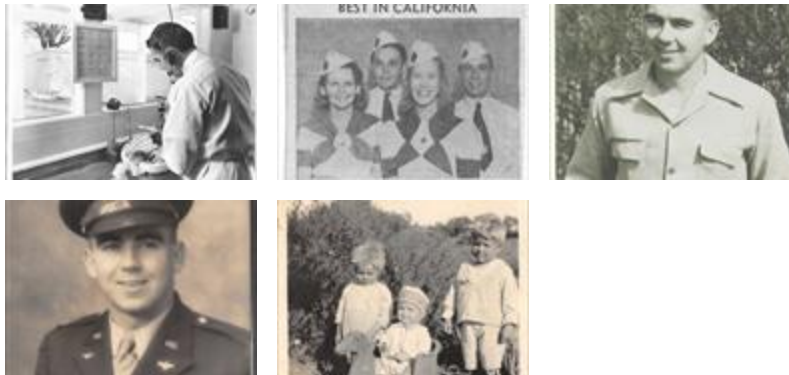
PD

“ Dear Trish, Thank You for sharing your memories of your dear Dads life. He was a wonderful, quiet man and we enjoyed him. We met thru Sacred Heart church where your Mom was an active and friendly. God Bless them both.
Pete and Mary Jane Doster

Pete & Mary Jane Doster - May 04, 2020 at 08:04 PM



“ 11 files added to the album Walter Franklin Hughes



Fremont Chapel of the Roses - May 04, 2020 at 04:47 PM