

Donald Lee Roek

April 23, 1937 ~ December 26, 2022

On December 26, 2022, our loving Dad and Granddad, Donald Lee Roek, passed into heaven and into the presence of his sweetheart, Rochelle. At the age of 85, Don succumbed to the ravaging effects of Alzheimer's disease, which he had suffered from since 2018.

The youngest of six kids, Don was born to George and Lena Roek on April 23, 1937, at Dameron Hospital in Stockton, California. He and his brothers Jerry and Jay grew up working at Roek Construction, which their father started in the mid-1950s. The three Roek brothers ended up running Roek Construction together, which was well known throughout San Joaquin County as a company of integrity and fair and honest work. The three brothers had lunch together every day. Roek Construction built everything from hospitals, jails, libraries, schools, colleges, banks, warehouses, and churches to fire department, police, and court buildings and many other commercial and government projects. In the 1970s, the brothers also started Roek Brothers, through which they purchased warehouses to eventually fund their retirements. Don continued working into his 80s, ending his career at Comfort Air.

At age 17 in 1954, Don worked for the Navy Seabees building naval projects. One Seabees project had him on a boat to Hawaii, and he got so seasick he lost 15 pounds in 2 weeks. Another project had him building bomb shelters at Site 300 above Tracy, California.

Don volunteered for many organizations. He proudly boasted having the longest membership in Lodi's Kiwanis Club of anyone in the club, surpassing the 50-year mark years ago. He loved to lead his club in singing God Bless America. He took great pride in making gallons and gallons of coffee for Lodi's Kiwanis 4th of July Pancake Breakfast every year and sold at least 10% of all tickets. He also had a heart for Salvation Army. With a handful of other people, Don brought Salvation Army to Lodi in the mid-1970s. He raised funds, oversaw building projects, and served on the board to ensure that Salvation Army thrived to help meet the needs of the local community.

Other areas of his volunteerism included serving on prayer committees, deacon boards, and choirs for First Presbyterian, Temple Baptist (now GracePoint), Carmel Presbyterian, Quail Lakes Baptist, and First Baptist Church of Lodi. He sang in choir, served in a basketball ministry called Upward, and attended bible study and Sunday school.

It's hard to talk about Don without talking also about his beloved wife of 55 years, Rochelle. Don and Rochelle knew each other since 4th grade; they married when he turned 21 in 1958. Don held their relationship in highest esteem, loving and providing for Rochelle faithfully. They were two peas in a pod! He tirelessly cared for her through her severe illness in the mid 1970s, and then through her bout with cancer at the end of her life. Their marriage was truly exemplary.

Much like David in the Old Testament who was called a man after God’s own heart and Abraham who was called a friend of God, Don deeply desired to be God’s faithful servant, reading his bible every day, volunteering, and praying without ceasing. He put his life in God’s hands and believed that God would provide for him no matter what curve balls life threw his way.

Don is survived by his sisters Joanna Stone, Ruth Strombom, and sister-in-law Patty Roek; many nephews and nieces of his five siblings; son Brian (Tiffany) Roek and their children Jayci, Kobie, and Lewsi; and daughter Stacy (John) Lippert and their children Thomas, Julia, and Carly Farinacci.

He is preceded in death by parents George and Lena, brothers Jay (Barbara), Jerry (Sue), sister Norah (Bob) Martz, and brothers-in-law Verner Strombom, and Lonnie Stone.

A memorial service is planned for early 2023.