



Benton "Ben" Frank Massell

August 18, 1930 - January 22, 2022

Ben Massell passed away on January 22, 2022. He is survived by his wife, Joan Heinkel, his children: Fred Massell (and wife Linda Maxon); Lisa Massell-Molnar (and husband Bill); Scot Massell; and his favorite grandson, Dylan Molnar.

Ben was born in Newton, MA to Frank and Esther Massell. After high school graduation, he left Newton for college at the University of Chicago. His college days were interrupted when he enlisted in the Army Security Agency and was stationed at Herzo Base, near Erlangen, Germany. He was part of a group of new enlistees called The Happy Hundred, who had too much time on their hands and spent too much time in the local gasthauses. But he also took advantage of having ample time to travel and developed his love of exploring new places and cultures. It was here that he met and married his first wife, Christa Sponsel. They divorced in 1970.

After returning to the US in 1955, Ben completed his doctorate in economics at Yale University, and then took on a diverse career working first for the Rand Corp, then 2 tours as an economic advisor in Africa, Stanford professor, technology advisor to Senator Ted Kennedy and energy policy planning at the Department of Energy. While at the DOE, Ben developed the gas rationing plan in the 1970's during the OPEC crisis. Although the plan never had to be implemented, it did result in a warehouse full of gas rationing coupons which

later had to be destroyed.

His interests outside of his professional career were also diverse. While in Africa working for the Rockefeller Foundation, he learned to fly and loved it, particularly flying family and friends to wildlife preserves. An experience of a lifetime was flying over Serengeti while the animals were migrating. He never forgot his call sign.

Ben was working at the National Science Foundation on loan from Stanford when he met his future wife, Joan, interviewing her for a job at the NSF. They married in May 1975. Together they took up sailing and racing on the Chesapeake Bay, organizing the J30 racing class on the Bay and winning the High Point trophy for the J30 class in 1983. While Ben's professional training was analytical, the creative side of him started to blossom after he retired in 1996 when he began enhancing his photography with Photoshop. Over the years, he created vividly colorful and imaginative photographic composites which covered the walls of the house. Travel, both domestic and foreign, often revolved around photography and included trips to Thailand, Vietnam, Portugal and the Scandinavian countries. His favorite place was Stockholm.

He always delved into his current interest in depth resulting in massive piles of books on the subject he was currently studying, whether it was sailing, birding, photography or Photoshop. He was a prodigious reader, and especially liked reading WWII history. He had a wicked wit and sense of humor and never entirely lost the kid within. He enjoyed the outdoors while hiking, cycling, skiing, photographing, and birding.

Music filled his life. He was particularly drawn to jazz. This love of jazz was the basis for many trips up and down the West Coast, and occasionally to NYC, to see favorite musicians in person.

He was Joan's much-loved husband for 47 years. He was the proud father of Fred, with his impressive memory and ability to talk knowledgeably about almost anything: of Lisa, the CEO of the Ashland YMCA for 30 years who developed the "Y" into an incredible resource for the community: of Scot, with his athletic skills, his informed political opinions, and tech career; and of his bright and thoughtful grandson Dylan, who with his partner Deanna, is building a life in Colorado.

A Celebration of Life is being planned for August 20, 2022. Please contact Joan for details. Memorial contributions are suggested to Pdx Jazz or the Deschutes Land Trust.

Tribute Wall

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“ *With loving memories of Ben. His photography set him apart he was so creative. Ben certainly had a wonderful, exciting, unusual life. Bravo Ben.*

Susan & Robert Agli - February 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ *We are deeply sorry for your loss ~ Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home*

A Memorial Tree was planted for Benton "Ben" Frank Massell - February 04, 2022 at 12:00 AM