Civic Leader James Leask Dies At 80

James B. (Jimmy) Leask, retired general manager of Leask's department store, died Wednesday at a local hospital after an extended illness. He was 80.

Mr. Leask joined the family department store after his graduation from the Harvard School in Los Angeles in 1920.

He managed the store from 1926 until 1936 and served as general manager from 1938 until 1963 and remained as a partner in the firm.

A native of Santa Cruz, Mr. Leask served as chairman of the Santa Cruz Port District commission from 1964 to 1973. He had long been active in plans to develop the Santa Cruz harbor as well as local yachting activities.

He also served as president of the Visiting Nurses Association of Santa Cruz.

Mr. Leask also served on the board of directors of James Mayflower Transfer and Storage of San Jose as well as on the board of Business Factors Inc. of San Jose.

He worked on the Big Basin completion committee of the Sempervirens organization, which developed the Leask Grove on the Waddell section of the huge state park.

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In 1965, he built the Leask House in Cragidamparish of of Tarves, Scotland, in memory of his father, Samuel Leask, who was born in Tarves in 1861. The home was deeded to the Tarves Town Canal with the provision that it be occupied by a needy and deserving family of Tarves.

Following his retirement, Mr. Leask spent considerable time traveling with his late wife, Velma, who died in 1976.

He was a member of Pogonip Club, Pasatiempo Golf Club, Elks Lodge No. 824, Santa Cruz Lodge No. 38, F&AM; the Commonwealth Club of California and the Sempervirens.

He is survived by three brothers, Samuel Leask of Los Angeles, Haswell Leask of Santa Cruz and Sherwood Leask of Waterford; and a sister, Margaret Leask Franklin of Santa Cruz as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Private cremation will be at the IOOF crematory with the remains to be scattered at sea.

Norman's Family Chapel, 3620 Soquel Drive, Soquel, is in charge of arrangements.