

Bio W
STANLEY WILLIAMS

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Downtown jeweler Williams dies at 92

By SHANNA MCCORD

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SANTA CRUZ — Stanley Williams, a Santa Cruz native who knew a thing or two about fine stones, died at his home on Sunday. He was 92.

Williams was the patriarch behind the prominent downtown jewelry store Dell Williams, which started with his father in 1927. Stanley Williams actively participated in the business until a couple of years ago, family members said.

Williams was born in his family's home on Broadway, and went to Gault Elementary, Branciforte Middle School and the former Chaminade High School — an all-boys Catholic school perched on the hill overlooking Santa Cruz that's now a resort.

He was studying pre-

med at St. Mary's College in Moraga when World War II broke out.

Williams left college early to join the Marines in 1942, serving as a bombardier-navigator.

He flew a B-25 bomber, mainly on night missions with radar assistance to attack enemy ships and kamikaze plane factories, he told the Sentinel in 2005.

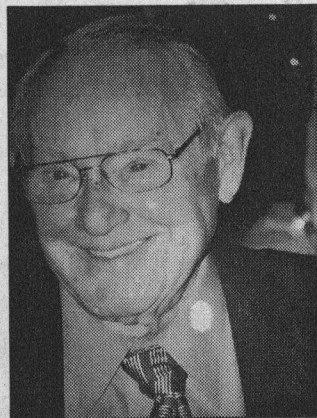
He came home from the war and jumped into the family jewelry business.

In 1948, three years after returning to Santa Cruz, Williams married his wife Joan and started a family.

(Williams and his brother Thomas married sisters Elinor and Joan.)

Joan Williams died last April, their eldest child Cindy Bernard said.

They had five children, including daughter Susan Williams who died in 2008.



WILLIAMS

They also have 16 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Bernard said her father was the driving force behind the Pacific Avenue jewelry store's success, leading it through the a major flood in 1955, the Loma Prieta earthquake that nearly leveled downtown in 1989 and sev-

eral recessions.

The store sells high-end sparklers and pieces from some of the industry's most prestigious designers such as Rolex, JB Star and Ritani.

"He loved the diamond business and colored stones," Bernard said. "He loved his customers and always made sure people were happy and satisfied with their purchases."

Granddaughter Emily Coonerty said her grandfather was a charming, sentimental man dedicated to his family and the jewelry business.

"His personality was such a perfect fit for the store," she said. "He gave his heart and soul to this business and this family."

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