

Capitola Mall developer deBenedetti dies at 68

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SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

Developer John L. "Jay" deBenedetti III, who built the Capitola Mall and Gateway Plaza in Santa Cruz, died Sunday in Atherton after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 68.

DeBenedetti was born in San Francisco and grew up in coastal Santa Cruz. He came from a pioneering family of growers and shippers.

He graduated from Santa Cruz High School, and in 1959, he graduated from UC Berkeley, where he was a member of the golf team and the Zeta Psi fraternity. He was honored to be a member of "The Builders of Berkeley" and supported many Cal programs over the years.

He broke with the family's agricultural roots and pursued a career as a commercial real estate developer. The beginning of his career was spent with Coldwell Banker and Sutter Hill Development.

In 1976, he co-founded Cypress Properties where he engaged in shopping center and suburban office acquisitions and development.

For several years, he was president of the Lake Tahoe lakefront homeowners association.

He served on the board of high-tech and medical technology companies as well as philanthropic interests including The Vista Center for the Blind. "Beyond being a successful businessman," said his son John F. deBenedetti, who is blind, "people respected him as a person with integrity."

DeBenedetti's son lost his eyesight when he was 11, which got him interested in helping organizations for the blind, his son said.

"He was real generous to UC Berkeley and to a number of blindness organizations," his son said.

He was a giving man, his son added, personally and philanthropically.

"He was just a larger-than-life leader of our family," he said.

DeBenedetti enjoyed golfing,



DEBENEDETTI

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business and philanthropy. He was a member of the San Francisco Golf Club, Bohemian Club and Menlo Country Club.

DeBenedetti is survived by his wife Marti DeBenedetti of Atherton;

daughter Ann Levis of St. Louis; son John deBenedetti of San Francisco; daughter Mary Newman of Lafayette; sister Jane McInnis of Atherton; eight grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of his life will be at the San Francisco Golf Club at a future date.

Contributions are preferred to That Man May See, a public charity supporting UC San Francisco ophthalmology, 10 Koret Way Box 0352, San Francisco, CA 94143-0352 or the UC Berkeley Foundation in support of the Memorial Stadium Building Fund, UC Regents/Gift Administration 2080 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94720.