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Warren Penniman, 74, title-firm founder, dies

6-9-88

Warren H. Penniman Sr., a well-known business leader and founder of Penniman Title Co., died Monday at his home in Santa Cruz after an illness. He was 74.

Mr. Penniman, a Santa Cruz resident most of his life, led many community organizations and was an accomplished musician.

He attended the first Montessori School in Santa Cruz, Branciforte Elementary School and graduated from Santa Cruz High School and San Jose State University.

After attending San Jose State he worked briefly in San Francisco, where he helped build the main organ at Grace Cathedral. He then went to Seattle to work in the land-title business. In 1935 his father died and he returned to Santa Cruz.

He later founded Penniman Title with his brother, George. After his brother retired in 1964, he brought in his son, Warren Jr., to help run the business, which had grown to four offices.

He enjoyed the land-title business



Warren Penniman Sr.

and was respected for his knowledge by many government and professional people. He was particularly interested in coastal tidelands and how they related to land boundaries.

In 1950 at an awards ceremony, he listed the most exciting moment in his life as "Riding a runaway horse down the sidewalk in front of the St. George Hotel during the Santa Cruz birthday celebration in 1937."

Mr. Penniman had a love of music and played many instruments. As a boy his parents would take him to the Monday Music Club; later he took music lessons. He often hitched his dog to a wagon to pull him down the street to the lessons.

He played in bands throughout his school years and later joined the Watsonville Band and German Band. As part of the Watsonville

Band he performed in hundreds of concerts, including tours of the United States and Europe.

He enjoyed history, sailing ships and travel. He had traveled throughout Europe, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, Israel, Mexico, Hawaii, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands and Panama.

He was a past president of the Santa Cruz Library Board, the Santa Cruz Kiwanis, a formant of the Santa Cruz County grand jury and was named titleman of the year for Safeco Title Insurance Co. He was a member of the Watsonville Band, the first Santa Cruz County Symphony and the IOOF Lodge 96. He received a special leadership recognition from the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce.

He is survived by his wife, Irene Penniman of Santa Cruz; a daughter, Cynthia Lenz of Santa Cruz; three sons, Warren Penniman Jr., Edward Penniman and Mark Penniman, all of Santa Cruz; two brothers, George N. Penniman of Santa Cruz and John K. Penniman of Lake Oswego, Ore.; 11 grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Friday at Holy Cross Church, 126 High St. The rosary will be recited at 7 p.m. Thursday at Holy Cross Church. Friends may visit from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Thursday at Norman's Family Chapel, 3620 Soquel Drive, Soquel, and from 6:30 until the time of the rosary Thursday at Holy Cross Church. Interment will be in Holy Cross Cemetery.

Contributions to the Holy Cross Pipe Organ Fund, the Hospice Caring Project of Santa Cruz County or to Dominican Hospital are preferred.