



Ray J. Seller

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'Mr. County Bank' dies at 75

ASHLAND, Ore. — Ray J. Seller, known as "Mr. County Bank," died here Wednesday night following a long illness.

Mr. Seller, whose 55-year career with County Bank ran from clerk to chairman and chief executive, would have been 76 on July 12.

A native of San Francisco, Mr. Seller came to Santa Cruz for Christmas vacation following mid-year graduation from Commerce High School in 1923.

Early in January 1924, he took a job as a bookkeeper with County Bank as he waited to register for the fall semester at UC Berkeley.

That temporary job became a full-time occupation and to a large degree, banking became his life.

He was first offered the bank's presidency upon the death of Bruce Sharpe in 1948, but Mr. Seller turned down the opportunity, saying he didn't feel ready for that responsibility.

But, he did work under the new president, Richard Snyder, as an executive vice president and engineered the bank's branch expansion, first in Felton and then throughout the northern part of the county.

Mr. Seller became bank president in 1958 upon Snyder's death. He succeeded the late J.J. Johnson as bank chairman and continued as chief executive officer until his retirement in 1980. He was named director emeritus in 1982.

E. Reese Davis, who joined the bank in March 1974 and later that year became president, was elected chairman and chief executive upon Mr. Seller's retirement.

"Speaking for the management group and staff of County Bank, we are truly saddened at the passing of Ray Seller," Davis said this morning. "While he's not been with us for some years, we will sorely miss his influence

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and his sage counsel relating to economic, financial and banking matters."

Gordon Sinclair, editor emeritus of The Sentinel, was a close friend of Mr. Seller and this morning said "Ray Seller's career with the independent County Bank reflects the outstanding contribution a man can make with high ideals and local knowledge.

"Under his leadership, County Bank grew with and for the community and its citizens. He truly made it the local bank," said Sinclair.

Mr. Seller was a longtime member of the Santa Cruz

Host Lions Club and also served with the United Way, the Santa Cruz Water Commission, the county Industrial Commission, the city Financial Advisory Committee and the county grand jury.

He is survived by his wife, Grace, a daughter, Kathy Cox, and two grandchildren, London and Tia Cox, all of Ashland.

At Mr. Seller's request, no formal funeral service will be conducted. Remains will be cremated.

Memorial contributions to a favorite charity are preferred.