

ON THE PASSING OF JOHN VAN DE KAMP:

Details of memorial service may be found at the end of this brief biography

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Former California Attorney General John Van de Kamp died unexpectedly on Tuesday after a brief illness. Van de Kamp, who turned 81 in February, had been in good health until recently and had been expected to make a full recovery. He was resting at home in Pasadena when his wife, Andrea, discovered that he had died in his sleep.

Famous for his integrity and civility, Van de Kamp was a giant of the law and one of California's most respected elder statesmen. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

John Van de Kamp grew up in Pasadena, the son of a family well-known for its bakeries and restaurants. After graduating from Dartmouth College and Stanford Law School, he began a long and distinguished career in law and public service.

After serving several years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, Van de Kamp was appointed U.S. Attorney for Los Angeles in 1966. Five years later, in 1971, he was chosen as the first head of the new Federal Public Defenders' Office in Los Angeles. In 1976, he was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fill an unexpired term as District Attorney of Los Angeles County. In 1978 he ran for and won a full term as District Attorney.

Four years later, he won the first of two terms as California Attorney General. Among his many accomplishments in that office was the creation of California's Automated Fingerprint Index System (AFIS), as well as creation of a Division of Public Integrity within the Department of Justice. He is also remembered for his strong focus on environmental issues, and on consumer protection.

In 1990, after an unsuccessful run for Governor of California, Van de Kamp retired from politics but not from public service. He served a term as President of the California Bar Association, and as President of the Board of the California League of Conservation Voters. Van de Kamp was also often asked to represent the public interest in complicated legal situations. Thus he was named the Attorney General's monitor of the Getty Trust, and appointed as the Independent Reform Monitor for the City of Vernon.

Always devoted to the law, Van de Kamp continued working in private practice until his death, with a special focus on mediation and arbitration as well as government law. In recent years he was of counsel to the firm of Mayer-Brown in their Los Angeles offices.

A man of diverse interests, Van de Kamp had a life-long love for horses and racing - including a term as President of the Thoroughbred Owners of California. He was an avid baseball fan, not only of the Dodgers, but of his beloved Oakland A's. He was Chairman of the Board of Lawry's Restaurants, Inc., and took a very active public role in his hometown of Pasadena - especially in support of public education.

John met his future wife, Andrea, while she was working at Dartmouth College. Over the course of a long and happy marriage, John and Andrea Van de Kamp became one of Southern California's best-known couples. Andrea's high-profile work in the arts and philanthropic fundraising, and John's focus on law and public service, led them to interests and friendships that cut across many circles in the cultural and civic life of Los Angeles.

John Van de Kamp is survived by Andrea, his wife of 39 years, and by their daughter, Diana. They will host an open house for John's many friends and admirers from 1:00-6:00 PM on Saturday, March 18th, and on Sunday, March 19th, from 1:00-6:00 PM at their home:

801 S. San Rafael Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91106.

Funeral services will be private, but a memorial mass will be held at 3 PM on Thursday, March 30th, at St. Andrew's Catholic church (311 N. Raymond Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103; parking is across Raymond Avenue from the church). A reception will follow, also at the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that gifts in his memory may be made to Dartmouth College (Scholarship Fund for the Class of 1956, care of the Dartmouth College Development Office, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755).