



# John F. Roake

MAY 21, 1918 - OCT 11, 2010



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## **John F. Roake**

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**J**ohn F. Roake, a long time Bay Area resident, passed away quietly in his sleep at age 92, surrounded by many of his loved ones while under palliative care at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Palo Alto. Scholar, decorated combat Marine, teacher, and lawyer for many years, Roake raised eight children in Burlingame and Hillsborough. In his later years he moved to Alameda with his wife Elizabeth, before returning to the VA Facility to live out his twilight years among his fellow warriors and abundant visitors. He loved it there. Roake was a fine father and doting grandfather. He was raised in adversity and passed along a sense of perseverance to those who knew him. He grew up in austere conditions in South Boston among his eleven brothers and sisters, yet attended Boston Latin and the Boston College on scholarships. At first rejected by the Marines as too small with poor eyesight when World War II erupted, he worked out relentlessly and became a Marine Lieutenant, who served heroically in the Marshall Island Pacific Campaign, where he lost a leg to enemy action. He never let his one leg slow him down. He recuperated at Mare Island, developing a love of the Bay Area. He was medically retired from the Marines, returned to Boston to marry Ellen Foley, and then returned to San Francisco where he and Ellen remained and raised eight children. John taught at Balboa High School in San Francisco while attending USF at night to earn his Juris Doctorate degree, and received his Masters at San Francisco State. After entering private practice for a few years, he then became an Assistant District Attorney in San Mateo County, before returning to private practice and teaching at the College of San Mateo. He was a member of The California Bar Association, The Knights of Columbus, Boston College Alumni, Serra High School and St. Bartholomew's Men's Club and several civic organizations throughout San Mateo County. He was a man of grit yet always offered a kind gesture towards those he loved and those in need. All reveled in his spell binding tales. All will sorely miss him. Roake is survived by his eight children by



## Obituary

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Ellen Roake :(Michael (Joanne), Patricia Russell (Darrell); Bill (Cris); Tim (Kathleen); Ann; Denis (Joni); Deirdre McQuillan (Kevin); and Jim (Tracey); 12 beloved grandchildren, and 4 Great grand children; and his wife, Elizabeth and her children; Jane, Judy, Paul and Patricia. Services will be held on Monday, October 18, 2010, at 10 a.m. (viewing) and 11:00 am (services) at Skylawn Memorial Park/ Lifemark Center at Highway 92 and Skyline Blvd., San Mateo. There will be a luncheon reception after. In lieu of flowers, you are welcome to make contributions to The Samaritan House at 4031 Pacific Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94403 or online at [www.samaritanhouse.com](http://www.samaritanhouse.com).



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

You came to say "Hi" to me in a dream last night so I Googled you today and discovered that you passed to the other side over a year ago. That was probably about the same time that I last Googled to find out where you were so that I could say "Hi" to you ... but I couldn't find you then and have wondered where you are. It has probably been over 10 years since I last talked to you. You were such a good friend but I got busy and didn't keep in touch, but you have always been in my heart. You walked me down the aisle when I got married because my dad was no longer living. I asked you to do it because you were my friend and I looked up to you like one would look up to a father. The funny story I'll always remember is when you came to my children's baptism you gave my 2 year old Sophia a yellow hard candy just before the ceremony. I think you just plopped it into her mouth to enjoy. She had never had candy before so she was delighted but when I discovered it in her mouth I freaked out (everything was a "choke hazard" to me!) so I took it out of her mouth in a panic. She cried through the entire baptism screaming "I want the yellow thing! I want the yellow thing!" She didn't even know the word for candy. That was a long time ago and we still laugh about it (and I feel a little guilty about taking it away, but I'm a "Nervous Nell" about some things). I really enjoyed knowing you, John, and I appreciate all you taught me. I learned a lot from you (I can still hear your voice in the Business Law class at CSM saying "Remember: a bird in hand is worth 2 in the bush!" There are birds living in my bush in front of my house and when I hear them tweeting I ALWAYS hear your voice telling me that!). My condolences to all your family. I know they miss you terribly. Yes, you were the best story teller and so giving and wise and always optimistic. You will always be an inspiration to all who knew you.##imported-begin##Christina Sauvageau##imported-end##

February 5 at 11:30 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Mr. Roake was my Fathers roommate for a short time at the Menlo Park VA before my father died Sept 9, 2010. He was always telling stories, and watched out for my Dad in the evenings. He was a very kind man and special man. My condolences to his family, especially to Annie who my Mom and I had met.##imported-begin##Mary Farmer##imported-end##

November 15 at 5:00 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

I am so sorry to have mentioned Jimmy and christine instead of Jim and Tracey. You certainly have my deepest sympathy ... Please forgive me ; I have double grief going at the same time ...LOVE, MARY GABRIEL##imported-begin##Mary Gabriel##imported-end##

October 19 at 8:07 AM



# Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

I share your grief thru Mary and Bob Guertin and thru Jimmy and Christine....You have my deepest sympathy... GOD BLESS... Mary Gabriel###imported-begin##Mary Gabriel###imported-end##

October 19 at 7:29 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

My deepest sympathies and heartfelt prayers are with you dear ones###imported-begin##Ondrea Kahlenberg###imported-end##

October 16 at 1:17 PM



**Anonymous** posted:

I will truly miss Uncle John. We had a wonderful and close relationship. He was one of the greatest story tellers who has ever been blessed with the gift to gab. Even though he lived in California, his heart was still in Southie. When he would come to visit I would need roller skates to keep up with him as he would go to, N street, O Street, 5th Street, Broadway and then on to Castle Island. I have such great memories there isn't enough words to describe them. My condolences to all his children, grandchildren, and to all those who loved John. Remember his smile, and twinkle in his eye.I miss you Uncle John.Your loving niece,Pie Remembered JoyDon't grieve for me, for now I'm free!I follow the plan God laid for me.I saw His face, I heard His call,I took His hand and left it all...I could not stay another day,To love, to laugh, to work or play;Tasks left undone must stay that way.And if my parting has left a void,Then fill it with remembered joy.A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss...Ah yes, these things I, too, shall miss.My life's been full, I've savoured much:Good times, good friends, a loved-one's touch.Perhaps my time seemed all too brief-â?Don't shorten yours with undue grief.Be not burdened with tears of sorrow,Enjoy the sunshine of the morrow.God Bless.###imported-begin##Barbara O'Neill###imported-end##

October 16 at 7:24 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Thanks for all of your love and sacrifices that you made for me to make my life full. Rest in Peace dear Dad for you certainly deserve it. Love, Deirdre###imported-begin##Deirdre McQuillan###imported-end##

October 16 at 6:11 AM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all! xoxo The Guertins##imported-begin##Mary Guertin##imported-end##

October 15 at 11:50 AM



**Anonymous** posted:

Hey Daddio!All is well. It is smooth sailing from here on out.Thanks for helping me this week with everything. I know you did.....LoveAnnie Bananie##imported-begin##Annie Roake##imported-end##

October 15 at 10:16 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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