John Carney

John Cleverley Carney
John was born in Seattle on June 28, 1934 to Elvin and Maude Carney. He died in San Francisco May 1, 2013.

John is survived by Mary-Louise Green, his dear friend of 53 years, brother Edward (& wife Suzanne), nephew Timothy (& wife Carlen), and niece Maegan (& husband Grant), as well as his many good friends on the Hill.

After graduating from Queen Anne public high school in Seattle, John went to Caltech and graduated with an engineering degree followed by a Master’s in Chemical Engineering.

John worked for Boeing during his summer vacations or their wind tunnel, and always talked about the interesting early experience that this gave him.

John joined Standard Oil in the East Bay for 2 years after graduation from Caltech.

John worked at Bechtel from 1966 for nearly 30 years, retiring in 1996 as a Principal Engineer. His insightful and independent engineering mind was always working to find better ways to design and build. He was both unusually forthright in delivering his opinion and also correct in his judgment.

John’s office was a nightmare to behold sometimes, but he could find a file on anything you ever wanted to know, and a detailed background to go with it. Detail was particularly important to John; engineering had to be consistent and correct. He spent many hours in the field learning this and teaching those lessons to many of his peers.

John was one of few engineers who avidly refused to have a computer on his desk; he appeared none the worse for this omission, and rather enjoyed the notoriety that came with his decision.

After he retired, he met monthly with a group of friends in San Francisco for lunch and retold stories of old projects. However, John always wanted to know what new projects were being worked on and whether they remembered some of the lessons he learned. Clearly, his active mind did not retire when he did.

When John worked in San Francisco he invested in property that allowed people to have an affordable roof over their heads. He continued this model in later life by leaving property in a trust fund for Caltech to provide student housing.

The family would like to gratefully acknowledge the wonderful help in the last few months from Elia, Catherine M, Abi, Matthew and Ken.

A memorial mass for John will be held on Tuesday May 7th at St. Teresa of Avila at 1490 19th St. San Francisco at 10:30 am. All are welcome to come to the memorial mass which will be followed by a reception afterwards at the church.

Published in San Francisco Chronicle on May 4, 2013