



Oscar "O.J." James LeBaron

October 31, 1923 - December 15, 2015

Longtime Yreka resident, Oscar James "O.J." LeBaron, passed away on Dec. 15, 2015. O.J. was born on Oct. 31, 1923, in Healdsburg, California, to parents Leota J. (Van de Veere) and Henry C. LeBaron.

O.J. graduated from Healdsburg High School in 1941 and then went on to the University of Arizona on a track scholarship. He held the state record for the 100 yard dash for a number of years. He enlisted in the Army shortly after Pearl Harbor. Following a short term in the horse cavalry, O.J. was ordered to the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. Other than several temporary assignments to the 745th Tank Battalion for the invasion, he completed his service in the 823rd.

His service record indicates participation in five battle campaigns in Normandy, Northern France, Central Europe, Ardennes and Rhineland; including Omaha Beach D-Day Invasion, Battle of Mortain, Battle of the Bulge and River Rhine Crossing. His citations include Purple Heart Medals (wounded three times), two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star.

In the summer of 1946, while both were working for Gallo Wineries, O.J. met the love of his life, Marion, and they were married on Nov. 28, 1946. Soon after they came to Yreka, where he worked in a Ford agency until purchasing a credit bureau and collection agency in 1951. From one small office in Yreka,

he grew the business to a statewide operation with offices in seven cities and over 300 employees.

He sold the business in 1988 but continued to work in the financial venture capital business until a late period in his life. O.J. was a past president of the American Collectors Association (an international trade association) and past president of the California Association of Collectors.

O.J. was generous and civic-minded, dedicating much of his time to community organizations. In addition to being a charter member of the Elks Club and a Babe Ruth baseball coach, he was a Yreka City Councilman, two-time past mayor, police commissioner, past president of the Juvenile Justice Commission and several other community organizations. He was also on the Board of Directors of the Scott Valley Bank for a period of 25 years. In 1985, O.J. purchased the Corona Cold Discharge technology patent and soon after founded Ozotech, an ozone water treatment technologies manufacturing plant located in Yreka. Ozotech continues to be a leader in global ozone technology.

O.J. was very instrumental in obtaining the Fall Creek water source for the City of Yreka. He believed that the city would become a ghost town if a reliable water supply was not located. He spent five years researching feasible water sources and over two years flying his own airplane to Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, lobbying to obtain both permission to use the Fall Creek source and funding to implement the project.

Within the LeBaron family and the Yreka community, O.J. will be remembered as a role model of civic responsibility and one who epitomized integrity, compassion and humility in both his public and private life. He enjoyed life fully and, with Marion, travelled to many parts of the world including Australia, Japan and Europe.

He was a skilled airplane pilot, getting his license in the early 1950s and was well known to the aircraft industry. He flew one of his many aircrafts both in business and for pleasure, amassing over 11,000 hours of flight time. He loved flying airplanes of all kinds and we had two sayings in our household: "O.J.'s second wife is flying" and "If it's over five miles, we're not taking the car!" He was also an avid golfer, playing both tournament and pleasure and the creator/developer of the Jack Pot Invitational Golf Tournament. He played the game he loved on many courses around the country and abroad but his "second home" was Lake Shastina Golf Course here in Siskiyou County.

O.J. was preceded in death by his father, Henry; mother, Leota; and his dog, Max, who was a true friend and faithful companion for many years.

He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Marion; his two children, son Rand (Cindi) and daughter Terri; four grandchildren, Krista Denton (Mike), Alyson Fowler (Jeff), R.J. LeBaron (Tasha) and Casey LeBaron (Tina); and seven great grandchildren, Spencer, Abby, Matson, Emily, C.J., Corbin and Mena. O.J. had many friends, young and old, and will be dearly missed by all who knew him.

Please come and help us celebrate O.J.'s life at 11 a.m. on Jan. 30, 2016, at Miner's Inn Convention Center.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Yreka Police Department Youth Activities Fund or The Salvation Army.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 30. 11:00 AM (PT)

Miners Inn Convention Center
238 N. Main Street
Yreka, CA 96097