

John Matus – 1913-2013

John Matus passed away on Sept. 24 at age 100.

At the time of his death John was residing at Carson Valley Senior Living Center in Gardnerville. We are very thankful for the loving care he received while living there for the last four years.



John Matus

John was born in Riverside on Aug. 27 either in 1913 or 1914. (Records are conflicting.) He is the son of Albert and Mary Grucella Matus.

The Matus family was a large Polish/Czech Catholic family and John was the sixth of 11 children who grew to adulthood. John completed high school in Riverside and then was recruited to UCLA on a baseball scholarship, but chose instead to accept an acting scholarship to the Pasadena Playhouse. There he discovered his passion for stage craft and began his career as a scenic artist and set designer in the movie, television and theater industry.

After Pasadena Playhouse, John assisted with classes in the theater department at UCLA and it was there that he met the love of his life, Elizabeth Johnston. They were married shortly after her graduation. During World War II, John was drafted into the Army and landed at Normandy on the second day

after the invasion. He was captured and taken to a POW camp in East Germany. When the Russians liberated the camp over a year later, he and his fellow released prisoners made their way on foot to Odessa where they were picked up and sent back to the U.S.

When he returned to LA, he and Liz were intrigued with a growing television industry and moved to New York City to work in that field. Their first daughter Virginia was born in New York in 1947. They moved to Leonia, N.J., where they adopted a son, Joseph in 1955, and their son, Michael was born in 1956.

John worked as the set designer on several TV shows, including "As the World Turns" until 1967 when he moved his family back to Los Angeles in order to be closer to family.

In Los Angeles, he and Liz worked both in movies and television. In the late 1970s, they began thinking about retirement and while on a visit to John's sister and brother-in-law, Dorothy and Don Clark in South Lake Tahoe, they purchased a lot in Cave Rock Estates, on which they eventually built their retirement home. They retired full time to Lake Tahoe in 1978, where John was an active member of Our Lady of Tahoe parish. After Liz, his wife of 43 years, passed away suddenly in 1984, John began working with a local stained glass artist. He later designed the stained glass windows for Our Lady of Tahoe Church.

John is survived by his daughter, Virginia and her husband Norm Glenn; his sons Michael and Joseph Matus; his brother George Matus, and sister Margaret Clabough, brother-in-law Richard Johnston and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife Liz, his brother Joe and sisters Mary, Ann, Frances, Dorothy, Barbara and Helen.

The memorial service will be Oct. 21 at 10am at our Lady of Tahoe Catholic Church at 1 Elks Point Road, Zephyr Cove.

John will be interred alongside his wife Liz at Forrest Lawn

in Hollywood Hills.

Arrangements are being made through Walton's Mortuary in Gardnerville.

For more information, call Virginia Glenn at (530) 541.5938 or vmatglenn@aol.com.