

Mortensen, Donald Grant

Donald Grant (Don) Mortensen died of old age May 2, 2007, 18 days short of his 94th birthday. He was born on May 20th, 1913, in Manassa, Colorado, to Jesse L. Mortensen and Anna Doretta Funk, the fifth of eight children. The family moved in 1915 to Amalga, Cache County, Utah where he grew up as a farm boy. In 1929, the family moved to Southern California where he graduated from North Hollywood High School.



Don's life-long pursuit of higher education began when he earned a Bachelor degree in Political Science and a General Secondary Teaching Credential from BYU. Interrupted by World War II, he ultimately earned a Doctorate in Education (EdD) from USC with a major in Counseling Psychology.

Don met Dorothy Hyde in Huntington Park, California and they were married in the Mesa, Arizona Temple on February 19, 1942, just 5 days after he enlisted in the Navy. In December 1942 he was commissioned as an Ensign, and following extensive training at Dartmouth, Princeton, Ohio State, and the Chemical Warfare School he was assigned to the San Diego Navel Training Station as an instructor in Ship and Aircraft Recognition. He also served in the Purchasing Division of the Naval Spare Parts Center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Following World War II Don returned to USC and was employed as a Counselor for returning Veterans. In February of 1949 he was appointed as an Assistant Professor, one of the founding faculty, at Los Angeles State College in Counseling and Guidance at Los Angeles State College and served as its chairman for six years. In 1965 he was offered the Deanship of the newly organized School of Fine and applied Arts and under his leadership the School grew to over 5,000 full and part-time students. With a fellow Educator Don co-authored and published five textbooks. He also served as a visiting professor at USC and BYU. After 13 years of service he retired as Dean but continued teaching part-time in the new field of Applied Gerontology.

He and his family enjoyed traveling. They have traveled in nearly all of North America and Europe, as well as visits to Japan, China, Taiwan, Morocco and Cairo in Africa, New Zealand and Australia, and the Islands of the Caribbean.

He has always been active in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and served in positions including: Ward Clerk, Superintendent of Ward and Stake Sunday Schools, Counselor in the Bishopric, Bishop, and High Councilman. His last positions were as a teacher for the High Priest Group and Branch Mission Leader