

GEORGE D. POWELL, SR.



George D. Powell, Sr. of Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, formerly of Jacksonville, Austin, Texas and Hinsdale, Illinois, passed away on January 26, 2021. He was 100 years old.

He is survived by his wife of 22 years, Joyce Tickner Powell; and his seven children by his first wife, Ruth Eleanor Powell (nee Majerski) (d. 1991): Marge Powell (Tom Palven) of Callahan, Ruth Ann (Wallace) Atwell of Atlantic Beach, George, Jr. (Vauna) of Austin, Texas, Thomas and Martin, both of Laughlin, Nevada, Jeffrey (Linda) of Minnesota and Kathryn 'Katy' (Steve) Engels of Sun City West, Arizona; 12 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild; three sisters, Orlena Klawitter, Connie Tincher and Carol Crow; two sisters-in-law Janet Hoog and Mary Ann Couture; and stepsons Malcolm Tibbles (Jay Cattanch) and Gavin (Angela) Tibbles; as well as Gavin's son and two daughters; and Malcolm's son and two daughters. He is pre-deceased by his parents Audie Powell and Mae Mary Hoog (nee Martin); his first wife Ruth Powell; stepfather John Hoog, Sr.; brothers Jim Shugrue, John Hoog, Jr., Carl Hoog and Bill Hoog; sister Madaline Baker (nee Hoog); grandson Nathan Powell; and Joyce's son Wayne Tibbles.

George was born on May 19, 1920 in Big Point, Mississippi in the U.S. and spent his youth in Bloomington, Illinois. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1941 and served actively during World War II. He continued his service with the U.S. Navy as an active reservist until 1967. His work life was centered on the then-nascent nuclear-power industry, working on prototypical power plants at the Argonne National Laboratory and later at the Fermi Laboratory in the U.S. At Fermi Lab he was the technician on the team that first photographed the neutrino. George and Ruth spent many years volunteering together as Unit and District Commissioners with the West Suburban Council, Boy Scouts of America in La Grange, Illinois. George was awarded the Silver Beaver which is the highest award given to a volunteer. George was also a 4th Degree Knight in the Knights of Columbus and enjoyed serving his parish in Jacksonville. Retiring from the work life in 1982, he and Ruth spent the next 9 years traveling the U.S. visiting children, grandchildren and being actively involved in trailer-camping organizations. In 1986, he and Ruth moved in Austin, Texas. After Ruth's death in 1991, George continued to travel the U.S. and also traveled to England three times and to Australia to where one of his grandsons had migrated.

It was after his Australian trip that he met Joyce. In 1998, they were married in Austin, Texas. In 1999 George and Joyce relocated to Jacksonville, to be closer to his daughters Margaret and Ruth Ann. During their residency in Florida, George and Joyce made frequent extended visits to New Zealand to visit Joyce's sons Gavin and Malcolm and their families in the Hawkes Bay area. In 2013, they relocated permanently to New Zealand, residing in Hawkes Bay until George was admitted to Mary Doyle Nursing Home in August 2018.

George was fond of reflecting on the fact that his life had spanned the time from when man first flew in airplanes to man's arrival on the moon and the age of the international space station. When asked about his advanced age, he would quip, "The first hundred years are the roughest!" Indeed, his life was a series of struggles and hardships overcome. As he approached his own retirement, he lamented the fact that he knew very little of his forebearers and became an enthusiast of genealogy, tracing his ancestors back as far as records would allow him. This interest in genealogy and the paltry amount of information on his ancestors led him to research and publish his own autobiography as a resource for future generations to better understand him and his times.

It is a tribute to his spirit of adventure that he leaves behind many friends and relatives on three continents and one very large island in the south Pacific.

The Powell family would like to thank the New Zealand members of the Tibbles family as well as the compassionate and devoted staff at Mary Doyle Nursing Home for the care and devotion they showed our father at a time when we were unable to travel to be with him in New Zealand.

A celebration of life will be planned at a later date.