

Hal Cole Sr. – 1922-2017



Hal Cole Sr.

Even though Hal Cole Sr. brought in the New Year dancing with family and friends, he died of a short illness two weeks later. He was 94.

Harold Cole Sr. died Jan. 14, 2017, in Reno.

Mr. Cole was born in St. Louis, Mo., on July 24, 1922.

He overcame a rough start in life to become decorated for his service in the Navy during World War II and then ran his own electronics firm.

Mr. Cole was orphaned at age 5 when his mother died. He was shuffled between orphanages and an aunt.

He enlisted in the Navy at 17, where he served aboard the USS Nashville in the Pacific during World War II. He was a radioman, which was where he learned the trade that would shape his future. He was in the Battle of Guadalcanal, escorted Jimmy Doolittle in his raid on Japan, was with Gen. Douglas MacArthur for his return to the Philippines in 1944, and was hit by a kamikaze in December of that year that killed 133 of his fellow sailors. He received two battle stars.

Mr. Cole also played drums in a band aboard the Nashville.

Between battles they would perform aboard various ships in the Pacific. He continued playing the drums throughout his life, favoring Dixieland and jazz music.

Mr. Cole's love of music ultimately resulted in meeting his future wife. Carmen Rushing was playing the piano at a USO. They were married in Reno in 1948.

With their two sons, the family of four enjoyed many jam sessions at home.

After his stint in the Navy, Mr. Cole attended UC Berkeley, graduating in 1954.

Many summers were spent in Sciots Camp just west of Strawberry Lodge at the cabin Mr. Cole's father-in-law had built in the early 1920s. Trips to Tahoe for groceries and beachcombing instilled a desire to relocate there.

During the 1950s Mr. Cole worked for Shell Development as an electronics technician in the research department. It was there he used his skills and knowledge of radios, which later expanded into television. On one trip to Lake Tahoe he found a TV shop on Ski Run Boulevard for sale. It included the rock house at the corner of Aspen Boulevard, a building next door, a television shop with all the inventory, a Volvo station wagon and a malamute husky. All for \$38,000.

With the help of an aunt, Mr. Cole mustered up enough money for the down payment and opened up Cole Electronics in 1960. He operated the business through 1972. He then bought and operated Alpine Security, a local burglar alarm company, until he retired in 1998.

While living in South Lake Tahoe, Mr. Cole was an active member of the Senior Center. He even served as president.

He was the drummer in the local Dixieland band The Tahoe Toads, which would often perform at the Senior Center.

Mr. Cole was the ski reporter for the *Tahoe Daily Tribune*. He also had a weekly column for much of the early 1960s.

He would transport the local high school ski racers to many events.

He also was an avid photographer and had his own darkroom.

After his wife died in 2000, Mr. Cole met Ruth Eachus at the Senior Center. She became his partner and loving companion. They lived in Reno until his death.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Carmen Cole, and daughter Rhonda Cole.

Mr. Cole is survived by sons Hal Cole Jr. and Robert Cole, both of South Lake Tahoe; grandchildren Clayton Cole, Casey Cole, Melody Cole and Robert A. Cole; and companion Ruth Eachus.

The family will get together at an undetermined date to celebrate his life.