

William Frank Russell

Essex

William Russell died in his home of 15 years in Essex on Dec. 9, 2018. He was 93 years old. He lived an extraordinary life of travel and adventure. He was described as a "classy fellow and a gentleman," and was a role model to many who knew him.

He attended Worcester Academy, Clark University, Wisconsin University, and graduated from the University of Colorado in Boulder. He had taught himself to ski on the slopes of Central Park in New York City as a child. He then became the first ski instructor at Arapahoe Basin in Colorado, when it opened after World War II.

He grew up on the East Coast and returned to Connecticut to raise his family and follow his first loves of sailing and hiking in the Appalachian Mountains. He was a very active member and group leader of the Appalachian Mountain Club for more than 30 years, and sailed his boat at the Essex Yacht Club for many years. His spirit for adventure and lust for travel led him to business careers in Europe and New York, and leading his family on innumerable trips of camping, sailing, hiking, and skiing in the east, the Rockies, the Alps, and all over Europe.

In his business career, he was an all-around entrepreneur. He held executive positions with Clairol and Gillette, and ultimately started his own sportswear business called Peter Storm. He went on to start a notable tour company called Bill Russell's Mountain Tours, leading hiking tours in the mountains from the Sierras to the Rockies, to Europe and Norway, which occupied the last 25 years of his life.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 54 years, Joanne Jackson Russell, from Madison Wisconsin. He is survived by his best friend and brother Dr. Frank Russell of Vermont and his sister Eleanor. He is also survived by his three children, William Jr., Torrey, and Lori, as well as three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was a man with a lot of stories to tell. He will be remembered by so many who shared in his fun of hiking and skiing the mountains, and sailing the seas.

