

Retired high-tech marketing exec Harry Lewenstein dies at 83

Memorial service to be held Friday in Palo Alto

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Harry Lewenstein, a retired electronics industry marketing executive, died Wednesday (Feb. 3), four days after his 83rd birthday. He died at home, his family reported, of complications from treatment for a bone marrow cancer.

A memorial gathering will be held Friday (Feb. 5) at 4 p.m. at the Hyatt Classic Residences in Palo Alto, where Lewenstein and his wife of 54 years, Marion, have lived since 2005. Lewenstein had moved to Palo Alto in 1964.

Born in Grand Rapids, Minn., on Jan. 30, 1927, Lewenstein grew up in the small town of Marble on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range, where his father was a storekeeper. Lewenstein served as an electronics technician in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II, before graduating from the University of Minnesota with a BSEE in 1949.

In 1951, he began work for Lenkurt Electric (later part of General Telephone and Electronics) in San Carlos as a technical editor. From 1960 to 1967, he worked as advertising manager at Hewlett-Packard in Palo Alto. In 1967, he joined Farinon Electric, a microwave-manufacturing company (later purchased by Harris Corporation). He served as vice-president of marketing and corporate secretary for Farinon before "retiring" in 1978.

Lewenstein spent six months as a house-husband at a time when that term was hardly known, before returning to work after finding that "there were no 51-year-old playmates (that his wife approved of) out there," he later wrote. For the next 15 years, he worked as a marketing consultant, mostly for the American Electronics Association where he developed a method for establishing the size of the American electronics industry, according to his family.

He was one of the original shareholders in the Palo Alto Weekly's parent company, Embarcadero Media, and served on the company's board of directors for many years.

In 1997, during a post-second-retirement bicycle tour in Portugal, Lewenstein fell and broke his neck. He was a quadriplegic for the rest of his life. He published [the story of his life](#) as a disabled person online and in the Palo Alto Weekly. He had, he said, the ability to be content with whatever life had provided him, and so accepted his disability with no bitterness. His family says that many people considered him an inspiration.

Lewenstein is survived by his wife, Marion; daughter, Bailey Merman; son, Bruce; and three grandchildren. The family requests that donations in lieu of flowers be made to the Paralyzed Veterans of America's Bay Area & Western Chapter, 3801 Miranda Ave., MC 816, Palo Alto, CA 94304.

— Palo Alto Weekly staff

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