

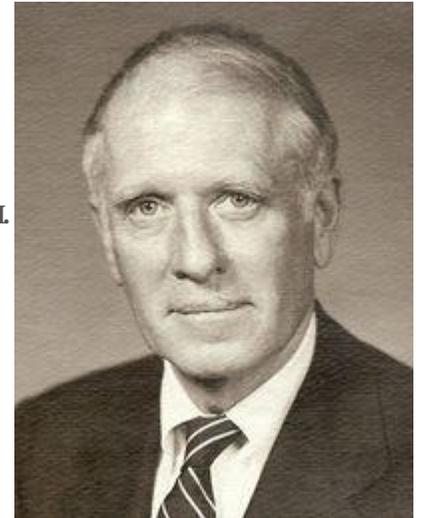
John Benson

Former president of the Waterbury Buckle Company

February 22, 2017

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. – John Benson, 96, a former longtime resident of Woodbury, passed away Feb. 18, 2017.

Born in Albany, N.Y., on May 14, 1920, John was the son of John B. and Amy M. Benson. He graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy in 1939, and was a member of the Bowdoin College class of 1943, leaving early to volunteer for the 10th Mountain Division, where he served until the end of the war. He earned the Army Combat Infantry Badge and the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service while in combat in Italy. He was immensely proud to have served as one of a select number of mountain troops from the 86th Regiment of the 10th Mountain



Division, who audaciously scaled Riva Ridge in the legendary, surprise nighttime ascent that occurred 72 years ago to the day of his passing, and which undeniably changed the course of the war in Europe.

He retired from the Waterbury Buckle Company in 1985 after three decades, having worked his way up from the sales department to CEO and then chairman of the Board. His reputation for kindness and fairness won the affection and loyalty of employees from the factory floor to the front office. He also devoted time in his professional years to serving on a variety of boards in the city, including the YMCA, United Way, Waterbury Savings Bank, Centerbank, and the Connecticut Business & Industry Association.

John was much loved by his family and numerous friends. He was a quiet, kind and gentle man who valued industriousness and self-sufficiency. He lived his life with integrity, common sense, compassion, generosity, humility, love and, most of the time, patience. He had a great sense of humor that often had family and friends rolling with laughter. He was a beautiful skier, had a mean drop shot on the tennis court and was a resolute golfer.

In addition to the family home on Nettleton Hollow Road in Woodbury, where he and Betty lived for 60 years, his favorite places were the cottage in Weekapaug, R.I., the cabin in Timber Ridge, Vt., and anyplace he could tinker with the tools collected through years of “do-it-yourselfing.”

John leaves his sister, Jean Wells; his three daughters, Susan (David) Turnbull, Amy (Bill) Cutting, and Liza (Mark Prestipino) Benson; nine grandchildren, Elizabeth Turnbull Henry, Douglas and Caroline Turnbull, Will and Ellie Cutting, Katie and John Tomai, and Niko and Michael Prestipino; and four great-grandchildren, Suzanna, Iris, Charlie and Molly. He also leaves behind Toby, his loyal golden retriever who was his constant companion over the past five years. He was predeceased by Betty Smith Benson, his beloved wife and partner in adventure, of 60 years.

A celebration of John's life will be held at the Highfield Club in Middlebury at 2 p.m. on April 8. Memorial contributions can be made to 10th Mountain Division Foundation, www.tenthmountainfoundation.org; or the Riverside Cemetery Association, P.O. Box 309, Southbury 06488.