



Merlene Bottomley
Died: January 1, 2025

Merlene Bottomley grew up in Sonora, California, and still maintains a second home in the nearby tourist town of Columbia, with its horse-drawn buggies. She attended San Jose State University, where her flair for interior design got eclipsed by business courses. She put those courses to good use when she and her first husband started the highly successful Bottomley Distributing Company. Besides a thriving business, their 34-year marriage produced two daughters, a son, ten grandchildren, and five “greats.” Merlene’s second husband, Dick Huxley, was on the famous 1951 football team at USF, which inducted him into the USF Hall of Fame and granted him an honorary doctorate. Dick died in 2009.

Merlene is an avid gardener, and she loved landscaping homes in Los Gatos and Monte Sereno until her knees rebelled. Her interests are voluminous: She was a three-times-a-week tennis player, a no-nonsense golfer, and a passionate 49-ers and Oakland A’s fan. She even had time for quilting. She was active in a number of volunteer activities, and for seven years served on the board of Valle Monte, which supports five mental health organizations. But her proudest contribution is establishing a legacy to build a girls’ softball field at San Jose State University.

Merlene’s travels, in part for Bottomley Distributing, have taken her to countries worldwide, and to football games all over the country with Dick. Her frequent and favorite destination is Italy, where she still has family ties and good friends.

You’ll often see Merlene with Coco, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, her constant and closest companion since Dick died. “She loves me but she also loves food,” Merlene jokes as she tells of her pet’s nerve-racking escape from their condo. A resident posse found Coco sitting happily outside the Manor dining room.