

Art Beckett

Arthur T. Beckett

Born May 23, 1894, Sacramento(?)

Died May 19, 1978, Walnut Creek, California, age 83

Father: Arthur E. Beckett (c.1869-1955)

worked in oil industry, then became harbormaster for Port of San Francisco until his retirement

Mother: Marguerite Beckett (c.1875-?)

Siblings

Roy (born c.1896-?)

Marguerite (c.1899-1976)

Wife

Gertrude (born c.1896-?)

married c.1916

Children

Jean (born c.1917)

Beverly (born c.1918)

Thomas (c.1919-1921)

Found dead in August 1921 by Gertrude. He had apparently become entangled in the ropes of a porch swing and strangled to death.

John (born c.1923)

Pro Football

1960 Oakland Raiders owner

Awarded franchise by the American Football League, January 30, 1960

Sold his share of the team, February 22, 1960

Civilian Life

By the 1920s, he was the owner and operator of his own contracting firm. By the 1940s, he was in a partnership with Fred Federighi that was involved in a number of major projects in the Bay Area, including the Bay Fair Shopping Center in San Leandro. The company, Beckett and Federighi, earned some small notoriety following their efforts to avoid paying some corporate taxes by declaring losses incurred by another company in which they had an interest. The United States Tax Court ruled against them in *Beckett v Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, a case that made its way into at least one textbook of exemplary contests.

He and Gertrude were active in various social and charitable organizations throughout their adult life. Most notable, regarding his connection with the Raiders, was his involvement in the 1950s with a number of charities run by the Catholic Church. These activities brought him in contact with several of the people in the group that formed the Raiders, including Chet Soda, Charles Harney, and others.

Death

Of the eight original owners, he garnered the least publicity before, during, and after his tenure with the Raiders and his death went relatively unremarked. He died May 19, 1978 and no cause of death was mentioned in the press. In addition to his three surviving children, he left behind eight grandchildren.

Quotes and Miscellany

Local papers in 1910 reported that he and another boy in the area had had their bicycles stolen.

An avid fisherman and hunter, he was mentioned regularly in the outdoors sports pages as having had good luck in some river or other, especially in the 1930s.

His interest in the Raiders seemed to be tepid at best. He seemed to be absent from all the group photos published at the time of the team's creation and was the lone absence at the team's first major organization meeting in early February. At the time of his death his obituary made no mention of his connection with the team.

In the 1950s, at least, and possibly before and after, owned a ranch in Moraga.

Hayward Daily Review

Oakland Tribune

Sacramento Bee

San Francisco Call

San Francisco Chronicle

United States Census Bureau

United States Tax Court records