Russell Vincent Hokanson loved the law, music and words. He embraced those pursuits and community involvement with vigor, family and colleagues...

By Peyton Whitely

Russell Vincent Hokanson loved the law, music and words. He embraced those pursuits and community involvement with vigor, family and colleagues said.

“Russ is the modern Renaissance man,” recalled Rich White, his friend and colleague at his law firm. White described Mr. Hokanson as a “first-class lawyer” with a “profound interest in and knowledge of music, art and all things intellectual.”

Mr. Hokanson died March 24 at the age of 93 in the Queen Anne Hill home where he’d lived for 58 years, and where his wife, Millie, still lives.

His son Russell Hokanson said there was no particular illness, but “he was just getting tired.”

He practiced law for more than 60 years, including marking his 50th year with one law firm in 2002.

Mr. Hokanson’s interests ranged far beyond his practice of commercial and corporate law, his son said.

“Dad loved great composers,” said his son, and “he was a word buff.”

At the office, that often led to tests of one-upmanship with co-workers, and Mr. Hokanson brought the experiences home.

“His favorite routine was to bring up a new word at a dinner conversation,” said his son, who is chief executive officer of the Seattle-King County Association of Realtors. “We’d have to race off to the dictionary.”

Mr. Hokanson served as president of the University of Washington Law School Alumni Association (1950), the Seattle-King County Bar Association (1964), the Seattle Library Board (1972) and United Way of Seattle-King County (mid-1960s), then known as United Good Neighbors.
He worked with the Red Cross for more than 45 years and was a member of the board of governors of the American National Red Cross from 1957 to 1963. He was vice chairman of that body in 1962 and 1963. He also served as legal adviser to Gov. Arthur Langlie.

Mr. Hokanson was born in Bellingham to Swedish immigrants Erick and Bina Hokanson. One of 11 children, he spent his school years in Everett and Seattle, and graduated from Queen Anne High School in 1931. He attended the University of Washington and graduated from its law school in 1939.

Mr. Hokanson was a Navy lieutenant in World War II and then met his wife, a Wave communications officer. They were married in 1945 and had five daughters and one son.

In 1946, Mr. Hokanson became a founding partner of Todd, Hokanson and White, which merged with another firm in 1952, becoming Helsell, Fetterman, Todd and Hokanson, and which is now known as Helsell Fetterman.

Mr. Hokanson also was a longtime member of the Sand Point Golf and Country Club and the Washington Athletic Club, along with being a dedicated UW Huskies fan.

Besides his wife, Mr. Hokanson is survived by his six children and their spouses: Connie Hokanson and Bob Brockett, of Seattle; Erika and Bruce Michels, of Seattle; Alicia Hokanson and Michael Turnsen, of Seattle; Sarah and Walt Puckett, of Seattle; Russell and Mary Hokanson, of Woodinville; and Johanna Sherman-LaRussa and Mike LaRussa, of Seattle.

He also is survived by his sisters, Patricia Hokanson, of Seattle, and Barbara Aymar, of Darien, Conn.; brother Randolph Hokanson, of Seattle; brother Frederick Hokanson and his wife, Sally, of Tacoma; and numerous grandchildren and step-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at St. Anne’s Church April 3.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances are suggested to Providence Hospice of Seattle, 425 Pontius Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109; the Adult & Family Service Center, 2104 Third Ave., Seattle, WA 98121; or the American Red Cross.

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