



Donald Dean Recknagel

April 27, 1930 - June 22, 2020

Donald D. Recknagel: 1930-2020

Don Recknagel, a longtime Ephrata resident, passed away peacefully at home from a stroke. He had an amazing intellect, warm personality, and many talents. An outstanding family man, he soared high above his humble beginnings. He conducted his life with honesty and integrity.

Born at home in Carthage, South Dakota, Don arrived in the world as the 2nd of four children to Alvin and Hazel Recknagel. Just months before Don's birth, the once-prosperous United States had plunged into the Great Depression. As a youngster he experienced many hardships. His childhood home lacked electricity and plumbing.

Like millions of other Americans, the events at Pearl Harbor dramatically changed Don's life. At the age of 12 he and his family left South Dakota for the shipyards of Puget Sound. Life improved for a while. Then in 1945 Don's father tragically died in a fire. His mother remarried and gave birth to a daughter. The family moved to Chelan where Don graduated from high school.

After high school, Don enlisted in the newly-formed United States Air Force. Following basic training, he and 3,000 other airmen boarded a troopship headed for Allied-occupied Japan. He served his country for four-years during the Korean War.

Back home, Don worked as a miner in Holden, Washington and Butte, Montana. For a time he worked as a logger on Mt. St. Helens. He returned to

his mining job in Holden where he soon met the love of his life, Dianne. They married in 1955. Dianne remained the center of his life for 65-years. For their 50th wedding anniversary Don wrote this poem:

“All was fine at the Holden Mine, in the shadow of Buckskin Mountain.
Especially the girl with the brunette curl, who waits at the soda fountain.

She was fair to see and the guys would agree, if you wanted to stake a claim;
She'd be the best of all the rest, for one to share your name.

So, a lonely lad was mighty glad, when she gave him a smile divine;
And love came soon 'neath the summer moon, and ponderosa pine.

So, while this is read it should be said, about folks like Jacks and Jills;
Instead of water they really oughter, look for gold in them thar hills.”

By Don Recknagel, March 2005

Married life suited Don well. The young couple quickly began a family. While living in Holden they had a son named Martin and a daughter named Joline. In 1957 the mining company in Holden shutdown. Don moved the family to Seattle where he found work as a guard at Boeing. There they had a daughter named Roxanne and a son named Steven.

By then Don had found an occupation that harmonized well with his physical strength and brainpower; carpentry. Typically a four-year stint, his sharp mind and work ethic moved him from apprentice to journeyman in less than a year. They bought a house in south Seattle and settled into suburban life. For several years Don worked in construction by day, and taught college courses at night. He often treated his family to camping, hiking, and fishing trips. He regularly sang folksongs to his children while playing his acoustic guitar. In 1965 a large U.S. contracting company recruited Don to work in Vietnam. For several months he worked as a construction supervisor in Saigon. When the war in Vietnam intensified, he returned home. In 1971 he accepted a job

as a building inspector for the U.S. Farmers Home Administration. The new job meant uprooting their lives in Seattle and moving to the small town of Ephrata, WA. Don later resigned from that job to embark on a new calling; as a self-employed contractor. He successfully built homes and businesses for the rest of his working life.

Don encouraged his wife's creativity and business acumen. Beginning with the Bookery in 1979, he and Dianne established many small businesses in Ephrata: A kitchen store, art gallery, fabric shop, apartment buildings, antique store, storage units, and a new bank. They also ventured into local politics. For 11-years Don served on the Ephrata Municipal Airport Board of Commissioners. He supported Dianne's roles as Ephrata's Mayor, Ephrata City Council Member, and president of Ephrata's Chamber of Commerce. Don and Dianne traveled to dozens of countries around the world. A voracious reader, he studied hundreds of topics: Oceanography, genealogy, architecture, history, biology, politics, language, cultures, and much, much more. His lifelong interest in American Indians culminated in an outstanding collection of arrowheads and artifacts. He enjoyed reading poetry, especially Robert Service, and could recite astonishingly long passages by memory. He loved museums, music, and animals. Yet Don's wife Dianne always remained the true center of his life.

Don experienced his share of sorrows. His parents and three of his siblings - Richard, JoAnne, and Harold – passed away before him. The death of his daughter Joline represented his biggest heartbreak of all. She passed away from cancer at the age of 57. Don's survivors include his wife Dianne, son Martin, son Steve, daughter Roxanne, sister Carolyn, twelve grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews. Don Recknagel lived a long, meaningful life. His loved ones will greatly miss him.

Tribute Wall

JP

“ *Dianne's cousin Phyllis Sisco Vannoy sends her condolences for the loss of Don!* ”

Jack and Phyllis - October 05, 2020 at 01:48 PM

RL

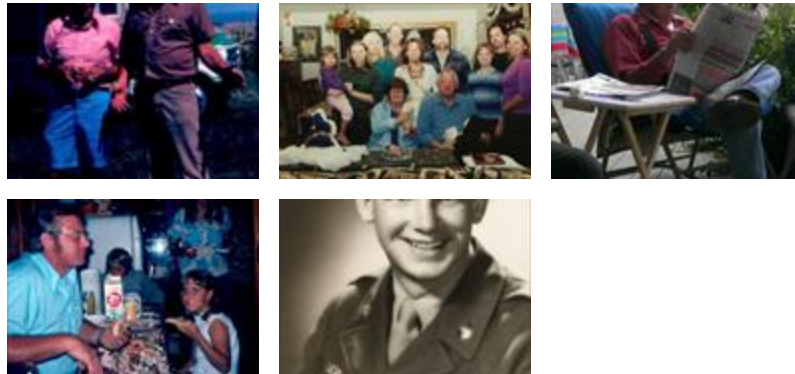
“ *Roxanne Lennon lit a candle in memory of Donald Dean Recknagel* ”



Roxanne Lennon - July 27, 2020 at 06:45 PM

RL

“ *7 files added to the album Life of my dad* ”



Roxanne Lennon - July 08, 2020 at 01:25 PM

JB

“ *My thoughts and prayers go to Don's family. While I never met Don we were connected by emails and a couple phone conversations on sharing our Recknagel family genealogy.*



Cousin Jerry D. Burgess (Son of Marjorie R. Recknagle, Burgess, Henry)

Jerry D. Burgess - July 06, 2020 at 01:26 AM



“ *I was sorry to hear of Don's passing. I have such great memories of working with him in Ephrata and he was always, kind and such an honest man. My prayers to his family.*

Judy Nelson - July 06, 2020 at 01:20 AM

CP

“ *I Will Always Love You, you were the best he will always be in my heart. All my love forever*

Carla Parkinson - July 06, 2020 at 01:19 AM

MW

I have such fond childhood memories of Uncle Don & Aunt Diane. I will cherish them as well as us reconnecting in the past few years...

Marie Watson - July 08, 2020 at 11:58 AM

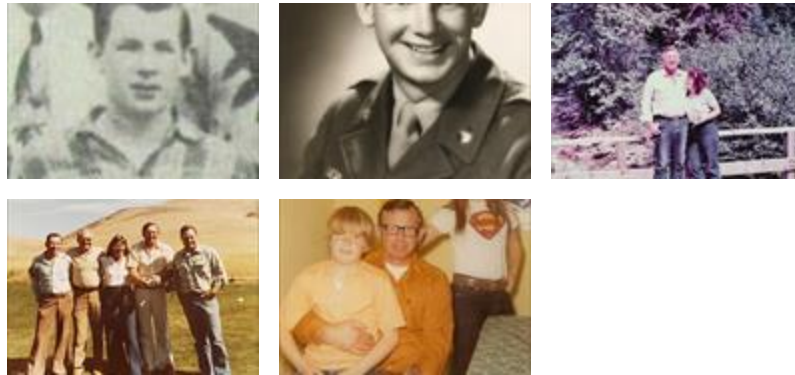
CP

“ *I will always love you so much. You were the best. You will be always with me all my love, I will miss you forever*

Carla Parkinson - July 06, 2020 at 01:16 AM

RL

“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Roxanne L Lennon - July 05, 2020 at 09:48 PM

RL

“ I love you forever, Dad.
Love, Roxanne



Roxanne L Lennon - July 05, 2020 at 09:42 PM

RK

So so sorry Roxanne. My condolences to you and the family.

Robin Kapalo - July 07, 2020 at 01:48 AM

PW

“ We were so saddened to hear of Don's death. He will always have a very special place in our hearts. We will always be grateful for the help and encouragement he gave us in helping to make Animal Tracks a reality. We offer sincere sympathy to Diane and family. You are in our thoughts and prayers. Sincerely Pam and Ken Westrope

pam westrope - June 29, 2020 at 02:49 PM

RL

Thank you, Pam and Ken.

Roxanne L Lennon - July 05, 2020 at 09:35 PM

VO

Sorry for your Loss Diane, Martin, Steve & Roxann the Olsick's thoughts & prayers are with all of you. Vivian & family

vivian Olsick - July 05, 2020 at 11:13 PM

BM

Don Recknagel was one of a kind,

His love for life, family and great intellect you don't often find.

His contribution to life was great and vast. The loving memory of him will forever last.

My Heart, Love and Prayers go to all the family, especially my

Dear Cousin Dianne, Love you all

Beverly Moore,

Beverly Moore - July 07, 2020 at 11:02 AM