

## Duane Francois Bassuer

September 20, 1929 - November 8, 2012

### (FRENCHY) BASSUER

Duane Francois Bassuer, 83, later known as “Frenchy”, died Thursday, November 8, 2012, following a progressive decline of several years.

He was the

third of nine children, born September 20, 1929 in Bismarck, North Dakota, to Joseph O. Brassuer and wife, Emilia Boepple, both deceased and buried in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

Duane was raised in several North Dakota communities before the family relocated to Miles City, Montana in 1942.

In 1944 he was confirmed at the First Lutheran Church and graduated from elementary schools at Miles City. From the time he was seven until he left home, Duane spent summers at his Uncle August and Aunt Lydia Neuberger’s farm in North Dakota. Duane said that he learned something about what a family champion looked like in those years, and he never forgot it. He was self-supporting since age 14.

Enlisting at age 17 in the United States Navy, he spent the next five years in the Pacific arena on ships, two being the USS Curtis when she carried three squadrons of United Nations seaplanes for Korean reconnaissance and the USS Oberon when she sailed to Point Barrow, Alaska with supplies. Frenchy would say, “I spent my 18th birthday in Tsingtao, China and my 21st birthday at Point Barrow, Alaska.” In 1951 Frenchy received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy.

Upon completing his military service, Frenchy worked on ranches in California before returning to Montana. He worked as a lambing hand for the N-N Livestock Co. and a truck driver and a roughneck on the oil rigs. At that time Frenchy found a home with his “foster father,” Tom Cunningham and his son, Lyle Cunningham in Miles City.

Frenchy admits that the years after military service were confusing and disturbing for him and that Tom Cunningham was of a reflective, analytical, and philosophical nature – and that the communications between them provided him some ever-evolving insights which were useful to his eventual escape from those past several years of aimlessness and progressive apathy. Frenchy formulated some new goals and organized plans for a change in the direction of his life. He took the GED test and easily passed without the necessity of class work.

At age 26 he enrolled at the University of Montana going two quarters and working two quarters which led to another defining moment in his life. He worked for a family who trailed horses to the Miles City Auction yards. Frenchy’s job was to saddle and ride them to find out which ones were good buckers. One day a bronc came over backwards on him and his back was smashed against the chute. After laminectomy surgery, he continued his studies at the University and met his wife, Georgia Mae Hurd of Twin Bridges, Mont. who was a pharmacy student. They were married September 20, 1959 and both graduated in 1960, Frenchy with a Bachelor of Arts degree and Georgia with a Bachelor of Science degree.

The couple moved to Billings, Mont. where Frenchy attended Eastern College of Montana to earn his teaching certificate which he finished at Montana State College in 1962, with an intermittent job being a claims adjuster for Safeco Insurance Co. He did postgraduate study at the University of Oregon in Eugene, before a brief career of a few years teaching English and creative writing in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Frenchy was 35 when he attended the University of Montana with an assistantship where he earned a Master of Arts and in 1968 applied and accepted a position teaching creative writing at Wenatchee

Junior College in Wenatchee, Wash.

In 1970 Frenchy and Georgia and their two sons, Tom and Dobierre settled onto an irrigated farm on Dodson Road, eight miles north of I-90, near Ephrata, Wash., where they labored to develop their farm. The farm was rill irrigated and had a 600 square foot cabin without plumbing.

Over the next 40 years the rills were replaced with wheel lines and those with circles. The family built a shop – a shed for the boy's livestock projects – and rebuilt the cabin.

In 1985 the family, including nephews, Malcom and André built a house of Frenchy's own design. It was dawn to dusk and sometimes far into the night, seven days a week for him. The work was never done.

He was involved with the real world of survival. He often said that in the early years it was his neighbors offering assistance and counsel that made all the difference. Frenchy has said he had no complaints. He liked what he was doing.

Though he made his living at farming, Frenchy had the instincts and the training of an educator. Through these many years, he expended considerable time and effort at enlightening, advising, and encouraging a number of siblings and his nephews.

Frenchy had long been interested in trying his hand at writing, but became too overly occupied with demands of the agricultural life to permit him any significant time for such projects. He had also taken an interest in the family genealogy project of his brother, Garner. In 1989 he published a 95-page manuscript of genealogical autobiography-biography, "A Brief History of Family Champions, 1909 to 1989".

Throughout the years Frenchy wrote many articles about his beliefs and values, and many letters to family, friends, and others – letters of affection, condolence, recommendation, and information. He leaves behind copies of his handwritten letters and papers over the past 50 years. His voice is heard in every word and his thoughts expressed in every page. Frenchy would say

“letters are a permanent record of an ongoing relationship. The spoken word emits only a soundwave that hangs in the air like icicles for just a moment before they drop and shatter, and what they said in terms of meaning is irretrievably lost.”

Frenchy has always been a big reader and over the years accumulated a library covering many subjects. He would buy copies of books he personally treasured to give away. He subscribed to and read many political/investment newsletters. He would send checks in “bits and drabs, \$10 here and \$25 there” not because he enjoyed giving money away, but to put his money where his heart was. He much preferred to make his life stand for high principles and not when it comes time to die have nothing to look backward to that was not essentially self-serving. Frenchy felt that one person cannot make a big dent in mediocrity, but he can do something.

Frenchy, you were always “tried and true.” We will miss your sense of humor and your forthrightness. You are our champion!

There will be a memorial service on Saturday, November 17, 2012, at 2 p.m. at Nicole’s Funeral Home in Ephrata.

Frenchy was preceded in death by his son, Tom, whose death left the widow, Barbra, and the two granddaughters, Michaela Mae and Sophia Janae of Spokane, Wash. He was also preceded in death by his three sisters, Aloha Eaton of Billings, Mont.; DeLaine “Skippy” Ban of Terry, Mont.; and Katheryn “Kitty” Davis of Terry, Mont.; and his older brother, Eugene Brassuer, M.D. at Mesa, Ariz.

Frenchy is survived by his wife, Georgia Bassuer; the pharmacist son, Dobierre Bassuer and wife, Karen of Spokane, Wash., where they are raising the three grandsons, Tyler, Mitchell and Walker; a sister, DeMaris Krahn, of Sedro Woolley, Wash.; and three brothers, Garner Brasseur, M.D. and wife, Betty Lou of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Victor Brasseur, M.D. and wife, Marge of Yakima, Wash.; and Philip Brasseur and wife, Dorothy of Spokane, Wash.; a brother-in-law, Ed Ban of Terry, Mont. and sister-in-law, Betty Brasseur of Seattle, Wash.; sister-in-law, Jean Anderson and husband, Carroll of Mesa,

Ariz.; and brother-in-law, Jon Hurd and wife, Jerrie of Boulder, Colo. Jerrie was Frenchy's student in Idaho Falls.

He also leaves behind the extended families of 25 nephews and nieces, with many of whom he has had close connections through the years.

Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 17, 2012, at Nicoles Funeral Home with a reception following at the United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. Public viewing is Friday, Nov. 16, 2-4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Summer Wood Alzheimer's Special Care Center Employee Relief Fund, Moses Lake or the United Methodist Church.

Arrangements are under the direction of Nicoles Funeral Home, Ephrata.

Please sign the guestbook for the family and view the online tribute video at [www.nicolesfuneralhome.com](http://www.nicolesfuneralhome.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **16**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Nicoles Funeral Home  
157 C St. N.W.  
Ephrata, WA 98823  
(509) 754-3420  
bea.white@nicolesfuneralhome.com

## Service

NOV **17**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (PT)

Nicoles Funeral Home  
157 C St. N.W.  
Ephrata, WA 98823  
(509) 754-3420  
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## Reception

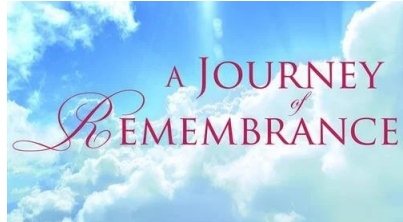
NOV **17**. 4:00 PM (PT)

United Methodist Church  
117 C Street NW  
Ephrata, WA 98823

# Tribute Wall



“ *Nicoles Funeral Home and Valley View Memorial Park created a Tribute Video in memory of Duane Francois Bassuer*



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**Nicoles Funeral Home and Valley View Memorial Park** - November 08, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ *grampa i love you and miss you and i remember when me and my sister came over and we had to hug you befor we got are present well i didnt even want the present love,sophia*

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**sophia** - January 16, 2014 at 05:31 PM

RT

“ *To the Bassuer family,*

*I was Duane's neighbor for 10 years, right across the road. One of the finest men I ever met.*

*Ricard Tupling*

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**Ricard Tupling** - November 14, 2012 at 03:02 PM