



Merrill Spence

November 19, 1924 - August 15, 2024

Merrill Harold Spence, 99, passed at his home on August 18, 2024. A few years ago, Merrill composed the following obituary:

Merrill was born on November 19, 1924 to Harold and Mary Spence in Seattle, Washington.

He attended high school in Seattle. A week after graduating from Lincoln High School in 1943, he was in the US Army. He served the 305th General Hospital in France, the Philippines, and Japan and was honorably discharged in 1946. He attended the University of Washington under the GI Bill of Rights, majored in fisheries and graduated in 1950. He didn't get good grades in college. However, in the last semester he got an A plus. That is when he and Betty were married in December of 1949. Then he was hired by the Washington State Game Department and they moved to Puyallup WA, where he worked for several years as a fish hatchery assistant, then as a fish biologist. I was there Carolyn, Bob and Richard were born. In 1961 the family moved to Ephrata WA, where he was the Regional Fish Biologist in the Columbia Basin Area until his retirement in 1980. Merrill and Betty served in congregations of the church of Christ through the years in various ways: Merrill as one of the elders and at times preacher, and Betty teaching children's Bible classes, as long as they were able. They were blessed with wonderful friends throughout those years and have had many great vacations with their family. 'God blessed us beyond measure'.

In April of 2020 Merrill began composing a weekly page of selected scriptures.

He added a portion of a hymn to form a theme. He typed them on his computer from his Bible and songbook and mailed them to encourage others. He completed 4 years of weekly scriptures. He was not able to complete year 5 #5, but he did type the theme he had chosen onto the page. It was "Let the Word of Christ Dwell in you Richly."

He is survived by his wife of 74 years, his children, Carolyn (Chris) Metcalf, Bob (Bobi), Richard (Whitney), 6 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren and his sister, Mildred Ball.

There will be a private family graveside service at Valley View Memorial Park, Soap Lake WA.

Tribute Wall

BL

“Merrill was part of my childhood. He made sure to include me in Sunday School at the age of 5. From there it was Bible School every summer. Merrill participated in our wedding 45 years ago and gave sermons at my families funerals. I appreciated all the time he spent with us. A wonderful man to be remembered. Our sympathy to the Spence family. Thank you for sharing Merrill with us. He will be missed.....Belinda Lewis

Belinda Lewis - August 24, 2024 at 08:03 PM

RS

Thank you for those memories, Belinda.

Richard Spence - August 28, 2024 at 10:53 AM

DN

“Always knew if Merrill was home if I saw a green 1959(?) El Camino parked in front of his and Betty's house on Maringo with an aluminum boat in the back.

Donna Nelson - August 21, 2024 at 12:30 PM

RS

Thank you, Donna.

Richard Spence - August 28, 2024 at 10:54 AM

SH

“Steve & Pam Hill lit a candle in memory of Merrill Spence



Steve & Pam Hill - August 20, 2024 at 10:19 AM

RD

“ I first met Merrill in late May, 1971. Merrill took me under his wing after my family and I moved from the Cowlitz Hatchery . It was a hot, windy and dusty day and the first question I asked was where’s all the lakes?? He assured me there were plenty. As time progressed, he transformed my university knowledge to practical field skills that remained with me the remainder of my career. I was always in awe with his hands on approach to fisheries management and his ability to help others, both in and outside the department. On many occasions he helped me and my family with what seemed at the time to be emergencies. I appreciated his willingness to assist others in need of spiritual and emotional guidance. My deepest sympathy to Betty, Caroline, Bob and Richard for your loss. He was my rock professionally and in life. He was a Prince and that for sharing him with me. Ray Duff

Ray duff - August 19, 2024 at 10:19 PM

RS

Thank you, Ray, that is a nice tribute. Not many of Dad's Dept. of Game friends are around anymore. Good to hear from you.

Richard Spence - August 28, 2024 at 10:55 AM