



Robert Arthur Hensel

December 3, 1921 - May 11, 2017

Robert A. Hensel
East Wenatchee

Robert Arthur Hensel, a native son of Douglas County, public servant, lawyer and farmer, passed away Thursday, May 11, 2017 at home.

Born December 3, 1921, to Arthur John and Ruby Webb Hensel in Waterville, WA, Robert was educated in the Waterville schools, graduating from high school in 1940.

The autumn of 1940 he entered Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) at the University of Washington, where he affiliated with Sigma Chi fraternity. He graduated in January of 1944 and was immediately shipped to the South Pacific Ocean. He served for two and one half years on the Destroyer Erben, as Assistant Gunnery Officer. While serving, his ship was involved in the invasions of Guam, Saipan, Tinian, Iwo Jima, the landings at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, Okinawa and bombardments of Kamaishi and Hammamatsu, Japan. The Erben was in Task Force 38 and 58 with the fast carriers around Japan. Following the end of the WWII, Robert Hensel was honorably separated from the Navy in May of 1946. In 2013, Robert had the rewarding experience of going on an Honor Flight to Washington DC with several other local veterans.

The autumn of 1946 he enrolled in the University of Washington Law School. He transferred to the University of Idaho for his last year of law school, from where he graduated in 1950. Upon graduation, he joined his father, A. J. Hensel, in the practice of law in Waterville. His father had begun practicing law there in 1908. They enjoyed practicing law together for eleven years before his father died in 1961. Robert continued the practice of law until 2006.

On September 7, 1947, Robert married Jane Adams King in Boise, Idaho. Following his completion of law school they moved to Waterville, where they lived until 1995, in the

same house, until they moved to a condominium in East Wenatchee.

Four sons were born to the union, and they were all involved in Scouting. Mr. Hensel spent a total of nearly twenty years as Cub Scout Master or Scout Master. He helped many boys realize their fuller potential while eating sandy, charred food, or sleeping on never very soft rocks. In January of 1971, he was awarded the Silver Beaver, the highest honor a Scout volunteer can achieve. Each Hensel son achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, which Robert, too, had earned as a lad of 15 years. In 1937, Robert attended the first National Boy Scout Jamboree in Washington, DC.

Robert loved to take his boys hunting. As each son got his license, he spent a couple of years carrying an empty gun, practicing gun safety, only being issued a shell when there was something to shoot.

Robert was stoic, sometimes to a fault. Chase recalls a hunting trip to the potholes lake near Coulee city where RA shot two high, fast teal out of the air with two shots. "Watch this, boys," he said, handing Martin the shotgun. He held out his right hand to catch one of the ducks plummeting from the sky. When the teal hit, it dislocated ALL four right hand fingers. RA snapped his hand, relocating the fingers in the process and simply said, "Boys, we're going home". Unfortunately, that autumn he was up for re-election as prosecutor. This involved looking people in the eye and firmly-bone crushingly, having his hand shaken all day long. Even after the swelling went down, RA had to wear his arm in a sling to prevent handshake re-injury that election season.

Mr. Hensel was Douglas County Prosecuting Attorney from 1951 to 1971. At that time, the job was considered "part time" and included being Coroner, Legal Counsel to all school districts in the County, and Juvenile officer, all for \$200 per month! Robert enjoyed the Juvenile officer part, agreeing with Father Flannigan who said, "It is better to build boys than to mend men". In 1966-68, he served as president of the state association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

Always active in the farming, ranching community, in the mid-1950s Mr. Hensel developed an irrigated hay ranch in upper Moses Coulee. For a number of years he had a cow-calf operation with J. Adelbert (Del) Shick. Del took Veterinary short courses and together they would search text books in their "vet shack" for diagnoses and cures. In a pre-internet stage, they managed to save and cure most of their cattle. Robert served as President of the Washington Cattlemen's Association in 1964-5.

Mr. Hensel was Waterville City Attorney for many years. He was a founding director of Mid

State Bank. He was the incorporator of the Douglas County Museum. He was a member of Badger Mountain Lodge No. 57, Free and Accepted Masons, initiated during Christmas vacation in 1941, almost immediately after Pearl Harbor, and El Katif Shrine Temple in Spokane.

Mr. Hensel enjoyed the wonders of nature all of his life. In the late 1970s he and his wife began serious bird watching throughout North America. He achieved the rare distinction of identifying more than 750 species of birds.

Robert Hensel was preceded in death by his parents and son, Chris Robert. He leaves his loving wife of 69 years, Jane, their sons & daughters-in-love, Martin Webb & Cecilia Mongiardo Hensel of Natick, MA, and their sons, James Arthur, Robert Edgar (Kelsey), & Chase Martin; Chase & Phyllis Morrow Hensel, of Fairbanks, AK, and their sons, Levi (Nicole), great granddaughter, Olympia Victoria and Jesse (Jessica) great grandchildren Aria, Winter and Eli; Cindy Reynolds Hensel of Seattle, WA and her daughter, Dylan Kathryn; James Finley and Maripat Cupper Hensel of Portland, OR, and their son, Ian Finley (Shaina) great grandson, Emerson Max, and daughter, Sara Michele; nephew Jay Johnson (Judy), and their son, Gavin, and daughters, Shelby and Stacey, of East Wenatchee, and numerous friends.

Events

MAY **Celebration of Life Service** 11:00AM - 11:55AM

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United Lutheran Church Waterville

203 S. Chelan St, Wwaterville, WA, US, 98858

Comments



“ What a beautiful, magnificent life. My condolences to all. His light shines in the family and friends he leaves behind.

Deb Hartman

Deb Hartman - May 18, 2017 at 11:48 AM



“ I was so sorry to read of Bob's passing. During my junior and senior high school days he was a second father to me. I remember trips to the family cabin on Lake Chelan and going on drives to look for birds. He instilled in me a lifelong love of birdwatching. I will forever be grateful for his giving and loving nature which helped define who I was as a person. Bob, you are loved and will be missed. Jane, Martin, Chase, Jim, and the entire Hensel family, you are in my thoughts and prayers. I love you all.

Dawn

Dawn Viebrock - May 13, 2017 at 08:06 PM



“ I met Bob Hensel after he was appointed Director of Probation Services in Douglas County Washington in 1978. Bob was a commensurate super boss who regularly worked with a variety of troubled youth. His favorite was encouraging the youth who were in need of some TLC, which he dispatched with great joy knowing he was making a change in their hearts and lives. What a joy it was to work with Bob Hensel for many years. RIP You Will Be Missed.

Bruce Voie

Retired Director Douglas County Probation Services

Bruce Voie - May 12, 2017 at 04:59 PM