



## Russell B. Gibbs

February 23, 1945 - May 17, 2020

The Coffee Pot was always on.

Russell B. "Russ" Gibbs was born in Wenatchee, WA, on February 23, 1945. He passed away on May 17, 2020, after an extended illness. Russ is a graduate of Wenatchee High School, class of 1963. He was a longtime Wenatchee Valley resident, considered by many friends as a Wenatchee historian, especially for the class of "63." He traveled extensively throughout the western states as part of his jobs, in sales especially, to include Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, California, Montana, Utah, and Nevada. Those jobs included JC Penney's, cooking and fishing jobs in Alaska, restaurant and hotel equipment supply sales, Wells & Wade Hardware, Spokesman-Review delivery in Wenatchee, WA, Denny's manager in Wenatchee, Mission Ridge Ski Hill, Safeway, Forest Service at Entiat, and contracted to build new and retrofit old interiors of Lowe's and Home Depot stores throughout the West.

Russ's love of entertaining and cooking for friends and family began with his work at the historic Chieftain, learning many wonderful recipes, and making lifelong friends among customers and staff. Entertaining was a passion for him at the Gibbs' Wenatchee family home and the cabin on the Entiat River, near Silver Falls.

Russ was known for his wonderfully positive attitude, generosity, and kindness toward others. He loved to stay in touch with friends near and far, and particularly enjoyed monthly high school class luncheons at Smitty's Pancake House. Russ started something he called "The Potato Run", by which thousands of pounds of potatoes were delivered from Quincy area growers, to charities and friends throughout the Wenatchee Valley every year. Thanks to friends who joined in the "run," that tradition continues today.

The Gibbs' nine family dogs, from 1947 to 2018, were central to Russ's life. With one exception, the dogs were Wirehair Fox and Welsh terriers. His mother, as a youngster, was fascinated by "Asta" of "The Thin Man movie series, and because her aunt and uncle had Wirehair Fox-Terriers named "Snoopy" and Queenie" on their Waitsburg wheat ranch.

Russ's last dog was a gift from Phil Erickson. It was an English Cocker Spaniel named "Mimi," who is now with Phil, Carol, and others of the Erickson family. Mimi is posed with Russ in the accompanying photo.

Russ loved fishing in NCW lakes and streams, and golfing in Central Washington, with good friends, John Carmody and Phil Erickson, and occasionally joined by others. Growing tomatoes in his backyard was a passion. Friends and neighbors looked forward to Russ' delicious tomatoes every summer.

In addition to Wenatchee High School sports teams, other favorite teams included the Seahawks, WSU Cougars, U of W Huskies, and especially the "Zags" of Gonzaga basketball fame! Russ and Leon Neal attended local Wenatchee games, and shared phone calls with running commentaries during the Zag games.

Russ has many good and caring friends. Special mention is made of Bert Daggett, his longtime neighbor who, in recent years, became Russ's primary home caregiver, checking in with him almost every day. When Bert couldn't do that, other friends would fill in for him. Bert had years earlier, when Russ was on the road, looked after the house, yard, garden, and dog-in-residence while Russ was away to the various jobs in the West. When illness worsened and ended Russ's working days, Bert took care of the shopping, getting Russ's medications, and looking in on him each day as Russ became less mobile. Bert's wife, Dawnell, shared in that help too. Richard Zornes made visits to the house to help relieve Bert of chores at times, to share stories about the old days, and thoughtfully opened the door to Knights of Columbus on Elliott Street, when special equipment and services were needed. Frank Dufelins provided home cleaning at times, and always entertained with many good stories. Russ was always grateful to Sister Maria Elena for her caring and assistance. She has since moved to Texas. The chore service help was later extended by Catholic Charities on Worthen Street. Longtime Gibbs family friend, Leon Neal of Wenatchee, also assisted with shopping, rides to medical appointments, and in the earlier, mobile times, was a great fishing companion to Russ's favorite fishing holes. Russ and Leon never revealed their most favorite, successful fishing hole.

Russ enjoyed golfing visits in the good years by WHS classmates, Phil Erickson, now of Lake Forest Park, WA, and John Carmody of Normandy Park, WA, who stayed with Russ. Phil gave to Russ the last dog, Mimi. David "Deke" Caldwell, now of Colorado, stayed with Russ on his annual visits back to Wenatchee. He, too, was a beneficiary of many good meals and welcome lodging. Along with Tony Hanson, they started a yearly "steak-and-whisky night," enjoying a good single-malt and perfectly grilled steaks prepared by Russ.

Jill and Dick Muncy would stop by the house and have phone chats. Russ enjoyed visits to their home on Lake Chelan. Home visits included Myron Atwood, Stu Wade, Jerilyn Lyon, Sharon Paine, Roger Erickson, Doug Rash, and others who helped make life good in recent years at the house. Phone calls with Ken Stavenjord, Ken Anderson, Dick Black and his prayer line friends, and Paula Maguire Barber were sure to make his day. Apologies to other folks not listed here, whose caring helped Russ during some low days.

Russ was very grateful for health care provided by the full range of primary care physicians and specialists, technicians and nurses, and physical and rehab therapists, and other helpers from Confluence Health, with a steady flow to the house of skilled personnel with home services and training.

He is survived by his brother, Allen Gibbs of Mill Creek, WA, who maintained the role of a caring and helpful big brother over the years. Russ is also survived by cousins: "Rocky" Gibbs of Spokane, WA, Charlotte Demlow of Newport, WA, Jackie Wells of Priest River, ID, Sheryl Anderson of Spokane Valley, WA; and distant cousins in Seattle, WA, and Maine. His parents, Albert and Charmein Marie Gibbs predeceased him by 13 years and 23 years respectively. Russ was their caregiver over the years, with help from his friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held in Wenatchee, WA, in 2021, when family and friends can more safely come together to remember Russ and their wonderful friendships. Jones & Jones-Betts Funeral Home Wenatchee, WA, has thoughtfully followed Russell's last wishes. His obituary is on their website and placed in the Wenatchee World. Next year's notice will appear in both places, when there is a decision about the 2021 gathering.

In the meantime, the family suggests remembrances be made to three of Russ' favorite organizations. Donations can be made to the Wenatchee Valley Humane Society, 1474 S. Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee, WA, 98801. Also to Catholic Charities of Central Washington, 145 S. Worthen St., Wenatchee, WA, 98801, with a note to direct the donations to volunteer chore services. Also to Knights of Columbus, 625 S. Elliott Ave., Wenatchee, WA, 98801, for medical equipment loaned for Russ's use over the years. Cards can be sent to The Gibbs Family, 1104 Glenwood Avenue, Wenatchee, WA, 98801.

# Comments

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“ Russ always enjoyed spending time with many of the classmates he graduated with. I will always remember him and his band of merry men who drove to Quincy to pick up potatoes and onions. They gave them to St. Vincent De Paul and other charities. Rest In Peace Russ. You fought long and you will be missed. Alan, you are in my thoughts and prayers. I am sorry for your loss.

**Sharon Paine** - May 20, 2020 at 12:30 AM



“ Thank you, Sharon, for your kind thoughts. Potatoes! After he was no longer able to personally participate, some of those buddies have continued the practice.

There will be a special celebration in Russell's memory later this year after the coronavirus matter has improved for us to more safely gather. allen

**allen** - May 24, 2020 at 02:45 PM

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“ Russell and I have known each other since we Kindergarten at Columbia Grade School. Russell, Allen and his parents lived a block away from my family on Douglas Street. He has always been a great friend. I will miss our wonderful conversations and his upbeat spirit. His memory remains in my heart. He is with the Heavenly Angels now. Pauline (Fenton) Dubois

**Pauline Dubois** - May 19, 2020 at 06:16 PM



“ Ah, Douglas Street! Our family moved from there in about 1952 to Tyler Street. Remained at Columbia School As I mentioned in note to Sharon, a gathering is planned for later in the year, as is a detailed obituary which friends of Russell are now drafting, and for me to add some recollections. allen

**allen** - May 24, 2020 at 02:45 PM



“ Russell was a dear friend for the past 50 years. I remember Russ for his upbeat attitude, his willingness to help anyone in need, his Miss Murphy who graced his Christmas cards one year and his love of tomatoes. Russ and his family will remain in my thoughts & prayers,

**Linda Emerson** - May 26, 2020 at 05:07 PM



“ Russell was a dear friend and an awesome guy. I am glad to have called him a great friend. My family will forever be in his debt for allowing us to care for and buy his family cabin on the Entiat river he was so fond of. I am so glad we were able to have him in our lives for that past 10 years. He treated our family as his. He truly was a very giving and thoughtful man. He didn't grumble about anything right up to the end. I really enjoyed our conversations and all his knowledge of the Entiat valley, not to mention his love to hand out potatoes and onions he would get donated from farmers in Quincy. He donated thousands of pounds over the years! . His heart to serve others before himself is a lesson we can all use in this day and age. Russell you will always be in our thoughts and memories and we will especially feel your presence when we are at the cabin. We will take the best care of it in your memory. Thank you for being part of our lives.

Tom Ovenell

**Tom Ovenell** - June 09, 2020 at 03:28 PM



“ Good man, good friend.

**Deke Caldwell** - July 24, 2020 at 05:06 PM