



Gordon Merritt Meacham

September 20, 1922 - May 2, 2013

Gordon Merritt Meacham, 90, of Royal City & Moxee, WA, passed away on Thursday, May 2, 2013.

He was a Royal City resident for the last 27 years and longtime Moxee resident (has homes and property in both cities) and he was a cattle rancher and farmer in both Moxee and Royal City for many years.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Saturday, June 8, 2013, at 11am at the Royal City Church of the Nazarene, 200 Calla Loop in Royal City. A luncheon reception for everyone will be held afterward at the Royal City Community Center at the Royal City Golf Course, 13702 Dodson Road South, Royal City. Feel free to wear your favorite blue jeans and cowboy/cowgirl shirt. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials could be made to Tree of Life (formerly Terrace Heights) Lutheran Church, 410 N. 37th Street, Yakima, WA, 98901; Royal City United Methodist Church, 316 Daisy, Royal City, WA, 99357; Construction for Change, 5525 16th Ave NE, Seattle, WA, 98105; American Cancer Society; or an organization of your choice.

Please express your thoughts and memories on the online guest book at jonesjonesbetts.com. Arrangements are by Jones & Jones-Betts Funeral Home.

GORDON MERRITT MEACHAM (Dad's Story)

Quoting his own words, Gordon Merritt Meacham “was born the last day of summer in 1922” near Lapwai, Idaho. Being the fifth child in the family of Sylvia (Doak) and Merritt Meacham, he joined three brothers: Hulburd/Harry, George, and Howard/Bud; and one sister, Irma/Meachie See. Two more brothers, David and Gene, later completed the Meacham clan of nine.

Gordon, as well as his siblings, spent the majority of his growing up years being that of a farmer's son. Growing grain and hay, as well as tending chickens, pigs, cattle and horses filled his daily life; skills which would later prove useful in his own adult life. When the daily chores were done, school work and lessons needed finishing. However, in the summer with school out, the Meacham children would often ride their horses, racing against the neighbors' horses, or visit the nearby strawberry and/or melon patches for delicious after supper snacks.

Gordon's dad, Merritt, believed in education and the family often spent winters in Lewiston, Idaho, where the children attended “town” schools. Thus, Gordon graduated with the mighty class of 1942 from Lewiston High School. During high school, he especially enjoyed math, poetry and literature, and home arts classes, and turned out for both basketball and track. In the late summer of 1942, Gordon joined the Navy and began radar school in order to serve his country during World War II. However, he contracted military tuberculosis and was granted an honorable medical discharge. When he had sufficiently recovered from the tuberculosis, Gordon enrolled at the University of Idaho at Moscow,. After two years, however, he felt he was needed more and better suited for working in the family business, Meacham and Sons of Culdesac, Idaho. One summer he ventured to Pendleton, Oregon, to visit his sister and brother-in-law, Meachie and Bud See. Meachie introduced Gordon to one of her nursing coworkers, Billie (Willamae) Gould, and the rest, as has been said, is history. Gordon and Billie were married on January 1, 1949, in a family ceremony in West Salem, Illinois. By mid-January, they returned to Lapwai as husband and wife; he, working for the Meacham corporation and she, the wife

of a farmer-rancher husband. When they got the chance, they would go to local dances, stepping out to the sounds of bands playing popular Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey hits. They also attended Peace Lutheran Church in Lewiston, Idaho.

In November of 1950, their first child, Ann, was born. The following summer, the three of them moved household goods, farm equipment, and cattle to their own Circle M Ranch near Moxee, Washington. Under the Roza Irrigation Project, their farm grew alfalfa and corn for the purebred Herefords Gordon so enjoyed raising and showing. In November of 1952, a second daughter, Sylvia joined Ann; the first time in nearly 80 years that two sisters were born into a Meacham household. What a celebration! The family joined Terrace Heights Lutheran Church of Yakima, Washington, where, over the years, Gordon served on the church council, Billie sang in the choir and served on various church committees, and the children attended Sunday School and were confirmed.

Gordon and Billie continued their purebred Hereford operation until the mid 1950s when a dispersion sale was held and the Moxee Ranch was “remodeled” for a 1000-head-of-steers feedlot. The year-round need for beef guaranteed the corporation a more steady income. However, Gordon and Billie continued their cow-calf and farming operation while acquiring summer range land where the cows and calves thrived. Alonzo, Gordon's and Billie's third child, arrived in February of 1956. The three children, similar to their father, helped with work on the ranch; tending the cattle, changing sprinklers, irrigating the corn and grain, bringing in the hay, etc., during their growing-up years. Letting daylight burn was not allowed by anyone.

In the 1970s, the winter snow pack was often low and lead to the rationing of irrigation water. In 1977, the most severe year yet, Gordon and Billie happened upon a small farm in Royal City, Washington. The area had an overall, warmer and more pleasing climate than Moxee. This farm could grow grass for summer feed and nearby hay was plentiful for winter feed. Thus, the

bulk of the cattle operation was moved to Royal City. Eventually, Gordon and Billie permanently moved to Royal City in 1986 and have resided there since then. They have been regular attendees at the Royal City United Methodist Church making new friendships with the many members there. However, they have maintained their many friendships and personal connections in the Yakima area, as well.

By the early 2000s, Gordon and Billie sold their cattle and leased much of their property to larger farming corporations. The land in both Moxee and Royal City now produces hops, apples, cherries, alfalfa, Timothy grass, wheat and corn. Gordon and Billie maintain friendships with, and interest in, those who now farm their original Circle M Ranch as well as the property in Royal City.

In December 2012, Gordon was diagnosed with colo-rectal cancer. Over the next five months, he chose to follow the route of chemo- and radiation therapies, surgery and rehabilitation. About eight days into rehabilitation, Gordon suddenly developed an intestinal blockage on April 30, 2013, which eventually lead to his death early on the morning of May 2, 2013, the same month and day his mother passed away.

Survivors include family members: loving wife, Billie (Willamae) of Royal City; daughters, Ann Meacham and Sylvia (Richard) Wallen of Gig Harbor, Washington; son, Alonzo Meacham of Moxee; two granddaughters, Jenny (Jason) Koenig of Seattle, Washington, and Stephanie Wallen of Jeju, South Korea; one brother and his wife, David and Doris Meacham of Lewiston, Idaho; one sister-in-law, Pearl (George) Meacham of Provo, Utah; nearly forty nieces, nephews and their spouses; and, a handful of cousins. Those also sharing the loss of Gordon are the many friends Gordon and Billie have made over the years of their lives. It was common to find them on the phone wishing happy birthday to one of Billie's childhood friends or one of their property lessees. Perhaps they would then be out the door on a drive to the river or Mar-Don Resort or Soap Lake. Wherever they went and whomever they met, they came home knowing they had made someone laugh or smile that day.

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Tribute Wall

MA

“ Dear Friends -
I'll never forget meeting Sylvia just after we'd moved to Yakima. Through our friendship I was blessed to know and love all of you. I remember how proud he was of you, and his enthusiasm at Honor Society tapping. Yes, I could picture his reference to me as a chicken running around with its head off. I was always impressed with how your Dad proudly provided wonderful opportunities for you. (Especially helping paint the brick walls of your house, and learning to drive his truck!)
Sharing a friendship with Sylvia and Anne for 40 years has enriched my life and brightened my days. Thank you for welcoming me into your home, your family and your lives.
You will always be blessed to know how much your Dad loved you, and how much joy you brought to him. My thoughts and prayers are with you.
With love,
Mary Teusink Anderson

Mary Teusink Anderson - June 07, 2013 at 11:56 AM

SF

“ Perfect picture of "Uncle" Gordon with his great smile and wonderful laugh following; usually after one of his "jokes" or a loving tease. Even though we weren't blood related he always said we could call him "Uncle Gordon." What a wonderfully full life he lived with the love of his family always #1, then his friends, then the land and of course his cows (cattle) not to forget all the family pets over the years. Gordon Meacham will be dearly missed and will live on and on in our memories with story after story coming to mind. Of course we will never be able to tell a story or joke quite like Gordon could!!!!!! Our thoughts, prayers and love are surrounding all of you.
All the Shove & Jacobsen Families

Shove & Jacobsen Families - June 06, 2013 at 01:35 PM

DG

“ Dear family - so sorry to hear of Gordon's passing. In reading the obituary, I see what a blessed and exciting life he had. I remember laughing alot when he was around. Sorry we cannot attend the Memorial Service. Jim's dementia has progressed to the point where some things we cannot do together any more. We send love and hugs as you celebrate his long life with you.
Donna and Jim Gilbery

Donna Gilbery - June 04, 2013 at 12:49 AM