



## Richard Gage Blue

September 16, 1928 - August 2, 2020

Dick Blue passed away quietly on August 2, 2020, under the care of hospice.

Dick was

born on September 16, 1928, in Ford, WA, to his parents, Gage and Nell Blue.

Raised in

the early years of the Great Depression, sharing humble beginnings, like many of his

generation, Dick often stated that he never saw himself as being poor, but rather lived with

the constant appreciation of knowing he had all that he needed. He often spoke fondly of

his early life experiences living on Long Lake, learning the art of handling mules and horses,

with a kind and soft approach from his grandfather. His father, Gage, and grandfather, Joe,

were cornerstones of the Long Lake community, owning the saw mill, and were a big part

of building the Long Lake dam. Dick was always proud that his family had such a significant part in that piece of history.

Like so many others who lived through the Depression, some of Dick's happiest times were consequences of the tight-knit

relationships between family and friends, necessitated by mutual interdependence.

By the age of nine, Dick was "doing a man's work", at granddad's ranch; raking, mowing, stacking hay, and hauling water with his team of mules. It was these experiences that created roots for his future years as a well-respected horseman in the northwest.

At the age of 13, Dick was sent to live in Spokane, WA, to attend Lewis & Clark High School. He lived in a variety of boarding houses. At the age of 14, his dad was hospitalized in Spokane with cancer. In that period, Dick spent his days after school, working and visiting his dad in the hospital, for the duration of his illness. He was the only family member able to visit his dad regularly, though his mother, Nell, was able to get to Spokane once a week.

After Gage's passing, Nell moved the family back to Chewelah, WA. Dick began attending high school in Chewelah, and working nights at the local Magnesite Plant. His salary helped Nell make ends meet in tight times. Dick referenced himself as a "wise guy" in these times, acknowledging an attitude of cockiness! There are numerous stories of pranks and teenage boy fun, in those days, clearly illustrating a young man with a bit of an attitude and a creative mind!

It was during the first few days at Chewelah High School that he met his future bride, Helen Wuesthoff, a classic oldfashioned hayride was their first date. During that school year, Dick learned that his Spanish credits from Lewis & Clark High School weren't going to be accepted for graduation in Chewelah. That information didn't set well with Dick, so he quit Chewelah High School, to enlist in the Navy, without completing his senior year. He was proud to be able to help Nell financially with his Navy paycheck. In later life, Dick often referenced himself as a high school dropout, who was fortunate to

be surrounded and accepted by a myriad of well educated friends. After his Navy tour in China, Dick returned to Chewelah, and in 1949, married Helen, his high school sweetheart. Dick and Helen made their first home in Spokane. In 1950, they moved to Wenatchee, WA, where they raised four children. During their 71 years together, they always had a beautiful yard and garden. Their team work as a couple was especially noteworthy when they began tackling house "rehab projects" from 1974-1978. Finding houses in need of "care", Dick and Helen got into the game of flipping houses, eventually landing in their favorite house on Rock Island Rd. Dick entered the printing world, working as a salesman for John W. Graham Company. Dick became acquainted with the owner of Wenatchee Bindery & Printing Company (Webpco). Starting as a salesman, Dick had a 40 year career in the printing and publishing industry. During the first 30 years, he was business partner with Harvey Lambson, and solo owner, of the business for ten years, following Harvey's retirement. Webpco developed a highly respected national reputation for printing quality promotional, educational, and artistic products, under Dick's sales leadership. He spoke fondly of his friend, Dick Houck, a master pressman, who joined the business in 1954, and appreciated their continuing friendship. The years in the printing world were full of opportunities, which Dick described as a "pallet for creativity". One of the things that Dick was proud of, was his ability to not only see problems, but also create solutions. He was a master of creating educational and promotional materials, marketing programs, and packaging solutions that the printing world could offer. He truly expanded the scope and reach of the business in an industry

often bound by tradition. He was known for "thinking outside the box" long before the phrase became trendy. The highlight of Dick's printing career included: the creation and development of publications for Cattlemen's Associations, Beef Councils, Wheat Growers, Lentil Growers, Pea Growers, helping to promote these industries, and educational materials in high schools and colleges. Dick grew the business, by expanding their work into these publications taking it from a small town office supply and business forms printer, to a major printing resource for the agricultural industries in the western states.

In the late 1970's, the company began printing lithographs for artists, focusing on creating collectible art prints. The company became a well-known and respected source for artists, who wanted to participate in having their works become collectible, investment pieces. Even though this kind of printing was exceptionally difficult, Dick was committed to creating a superior quality product, and thus, became the "go-to" source for these elite printing projects. It was a great outlet for Dick's own artistic abilities. In 2007, he was especially thrilled to see one of the Michael Gentry prints hanging in the museum at the South Dakota Crazy Horse Museum.

Consistent in all the creative endeavors and the building of a professional reputation, was the importance of integrity. In every conversation with Dick, one would hear the significance of these values, and the importance of living up the expectations of the trust people place in the person and the business.

During his professional life, Dick served on many non-profit boards, primarily working on community fundraising projects. He was proud of the significant contributions these projects made to the betterment of the community. Highlights

included: Wenatchee Valley College Foundation and its successful building of the Omak college facility. He and his friend, Jake Lodato, were instrumental in publishing the 100 Year Celebration, culminating the years of fun he had working with the College Foundation.

A true believer in consumer education for young adults, he and friends, Bob Parlette, and Scott Kane, were instrumental in forming YACET (Young Adult Consumer Education Training), in 1999. The organization was funded by the Sears corporation. Dick's success in publishing educational materials for this age group over the years, was a great benefit to YACET's development of programs teaching young people about personal financial management. He was proud that his son, Dave, is still actively involved in the program.

In the early 1990's, Dick was asked by his friend, Ben Couch, to become involved with the Cashmere Museum to help revitalize the facility's property and programs. Dick served on the board for six years, assisting in revitalizing the museum's "Pioneer Village", placement of Walter Graham's art displays, and clearing the organization's debt, through significant fundraising efforts.

When the North Cascade Highway was opened in 1972, his friend, John Huselton, proprietor of Sun Mountain Lodge, approached Dick with the idea of creating an ongoing tourist promotional tool, that would enhance and support tourist activity, a concept that had begun with the Chambers of Commerce, in surrounding communities. From the investments of John, Dick, and Gordon Ohme, came an annual visitor guide program known as The Cascade Loop, supported by advertisements, benefiting the communities which tourists could explore, while driving this amazing highway. The state

acknowledged the value of the Cascade Loop experience with the placement of signage.

Dick was proud of the fact that so many of these fundraising projects were not only successful in their initial inception, but also in the longevity and continued value they continue to bring. He often spoke of the joy and satisfaction he gained from these community projects, the rewarding contacts that came his way from these efforts, and contributions of time and energy.

Of all the experiences Dick had, it was the Miller/Blue partnership, which came into being in 1972, that captured his heart. This partnership provided horses to youth camps throughout the northwest, and is still continuing today. The program began initially with Totem Girl Scout Council, and expanded into Campfire, CYO and YMCA camps, as well as several church and private camps, eventually serving 15 camps over the course of 50 years. They were able to document three million hours of children riding their horses. Dick's deep friendship with business partner, Claude Miller, was built upon respect and appreciation for each other's skills and knowledge, as horsemen and business professionals.

While there were countless memories over the program's 50 year span, one specifically stood out. This was the weeklong pack trip in the high country for deaf and blind students from the Seattle Community College in the 1990's. Dick often spoke with admiration for what these students were able to accomplish during their backcountry experience, and was proud of the memories they were able to help create for these young people. This period of Dick's life was marked with colorful memories of big adventure, wonderful horses, and rewarding

relationships with the camp agencies they served. The stacks of photo albums documenting the era tell a story unlike any other, and truly represent a unique experience not likely to be recreated in this changing world.

Dick was proud of the fact that the American Camping Association used the Miller/Blue program as the model for creating safety guidelines for horseback riding programs in youth camps nationwide. Awards from both the national Campfire organization and ACA attest to the significance of the Miller/Blue leadership in the youth camping industry.

Anyone listening to Dick remember his life, realized quickly that he was a person who lived life as an artform. His many years in the printing industry created an opportunity to explore the work as though it were a full pallet of colors.

In his later years, on into retirement, Dick pursued his interests in woodworking, honing his skills with each new project.

Many friends and family members have a unique furniture piece he made with great attention to design and detail. It was a gift from his heart when he crafted a piece, and a treasure for those who received them.

Dick is survived by his bride, Helen, of 71 years. He often referred to their partnership as being "two halves of a whole".

Dick is also survived by daughters: Marny Bowers (Charlie of Idaho Falls, Id, and Chris Blue of Winthrop, WA; son, Dave (Lisa) of Omak, WA; as well as three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Marilyn; brother, Roger; and daughter, Karen.

In lieu of flowers, Dick asked that memorial contributions be made to the Cashmere Museum Pioneer Village.

Due to current COVID challenges, there will be no memorial service or gathering. Cremation arrangements under the

direction of Jones & Jones-Betts Funeral Home, Wenatchee, WA. Dick's ashes will be taken to a favorite location via horseback, a final ride for a beloved cowboy, father, husband, and friend.

# Tribute Wall

LO

“ My dad and I are shaken by the passing of Dick. Dad considered him a great friend of many years. I personally saw Dick just before the pandemic hit here when he made a quick stop at my dad's house to say hello. What a gift that turned out to be for me: to hug this wonderfully kind, gentle, and dear man whom I had not seen in so many years. I had planned to take my dad to visit Dick and Helen "sometime" we kept saying, then Covid came. He was a real prince of man and we, like many, feel the hole left by his passing. Blessing and our best to you all, his cherished family.  
Loraine Orach (Matthews) and BJ Matthews

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**Loraine Orach** - August 05, 2020 at 09:59 PM

EV

I came up from California with 12 years of web press experience and zilch experience in offset press experience. I interviewed with Dick and he gave me the opportunity to learn the offset industry. Dick was a kind man and approachable. I remember a time when my daughter was in middle school, I was looking into a having a horse back riding party for her birthday, when he heard about my inquiry he offered the use of his horses stabled south of Malaga. This was when heard that Dick had a heard of horses that ranged in the brush land in the south Malaga area, he had his friend Cathy be our guide. To Dave, I offer my condolences and to the rest the Blue family.

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**Ernie Valdez** - August 12, 2020 at 01:20 AM

PH

*I am so sorry that we all have lost a very special man. I enjoyed visiting with Dick when he would come into the office where I worked. He shared, very humbly, about life's experiences. On one of our first conversations, some 14 years ago, I discovered Dick had known my father. He had worked with my father for a short time. My father passed away in 1966 so that would have been a long time ago but Dick remembered him. He went on to share some very nice memories he had of my father which endeared Dick to me!! I learned to respect Dick as he shared his philosophy and values on life. I looked forward to seeing him each time he would call or come into the office. I will dearly miss him. He had the nicest beautiful heart and he shared it with all of us. I feel grateful he shared it with me. My favorite memory is when he left, he always said "I need to get home to my lovely bride". He always left me with a smile! My deepest sympathy to all who knew Dick but especially his family. He was SO proud of his family and he shared that joy. We have lost a dear soul.*

*Patti Hindman*

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**Patti Hindman** - August 16, 2020 at 06:43 PM