



Walter L. Kershner

October 17, 1937 - December 26, 2024

Walter L. Kershner died at Confluence Health Hospital in Wenatchee, Washington on December 26, 2024 at age 87. Still, his remarkable life began in 1937 when he was born at the family home in the “Sooner State” of Oklahoma. The youngest of four children, he inherited his parents’ work ethic and began picking cotton at an early age to save money for a bicycle he ordered from Sears Roebuck & Company. When he was seven, he gave his heart to Jesus and was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a result, he decided to attend high school at Sandia View Academy, a Seventh-day Adventist boarding school outside of Albuquerque, New Mexico, so he began working odd jobs to save money for tuition. In the meantime, the family moved to Creed, Colorado, so when he was thirteen years old, he boarded the train for New Mexico. There at the academy he learned to play the clarinet in the school band and made lifelong friends. He worked at the academy farm before classes started and then again in the afternoon and spent all his vacations at the school, only hitchhiking home for Christmas. His dedication and hard work paid off, and he graduated valedictorian of his senior class.

After a semester at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, he moved to La Sierra, California, where he got a job at Ace Drill Bushings full time and a part time job at the gas station at the corner of La Sierra Avenue and Pierce Street. It was at the gas station that he noticed a beautiful young woman sitting in the front seat with her aunt while he washed their windshield and

filled up their car with gas. Once Rita caught a glimpse of his blue eyes, she started walking by the gas station every day on her way to work. Before long, he asked her out and on June 1, 1958, Walter and Rita Kershner were married in the La Sierra Seventh-day Adventist Church. Soon, two little girls joined them, and Walter put his dreams of a college education on hold to support his family, working two, and sometimes three jobs. It wasn't long before he became a supervisor at Ace Drill Bushings. But on Friday or Saturday afternoons, Walter took the family to one of his favorite places—the beach where some of the best memories were made.

His dream was to work in the dental field, so when his girls were older, he traveled to Los Angeles every day to attend classes to become a dental technician, and he worked nights in the family's garage, honing bushings for Ace. When he graduated, he decided to make a fresh start in Bozeman, Montana with his family and began working for Montana Dental Lab in 1973. A year later they moved to Billings, Montana where Walter worked for the Billings branch of Montana Dental Lab and later purchased the lab. He loved owning his own business and enjoyed talking with the dentists, delivery people, family, and friends who would stop by. He also continued to pursue a college degree in business, taking classes whenever he could fit them in. A highlight during this time was the celebration of Walter and Rita's 50th wedding anniversary at the Oregon Coast with their family. Together, he and his wife Rita kept Montana Dental Lab thriving for 41 years until they sold it and moved to Wenatchee, Washington to be near family in 2015.

The last ten years of Walter's life was in many ways his greatest challenge as he battled Parkinson's disease. Ironically, it enabled him to slow down and spend more time with family. He loved reading, playing Rummikub, exercising on his treadmill and stationary bike, and going out to eat. Too soon, the disease claimed more and more of his body and mind until he succumbed to the flu and pneumonia. He died the day after Christmas, December 26, 2024,

after all of the family was able to tell him that they loved him for the last time. His family and friends will remember him best as a hard worker, a man whose beautiful blue eyes shone with kindness and integrity, who was generous and had a subtle sense of humor. His daughter Vicki said, "He was the strongest and bravest man I ever knew," and his daughter Gina called him "the best daddy. . . a wonderful example, mentor, and friend." In the last year of his life, Walter was blessed with new friendships and great care during a short stay at Colonial Vista South Rehab. The family is also thankful for the care provided by Confluence Health Home Health, for his caregiver from Serengeti, and for the medical personnel at Confluence Health Wenatchee Valley Clinic and Hospital. Walter is preceded in death by his parents, Ernest and Goldie Blanche Keshner, his brother Warren, and sisters Geneva Wheeler and Charlene. He is survived by his wife Rita, his daughters Vicki (Roger) Downer and Gina (Darren) Benson, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

He will rest at the Wenatchee Cemetery until Jesus comes and wakes him up to take him and his family to heaven where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

Arrangements by Jones & Jones – Betts Funeral Home