



## William "Bill" Asplund

October 11, 1932 - January 12, 2022

Teacher, retailer, mentor, and mountaineer, WR (Bill) Asplund age 89 of Wenatchee passed away on January 12. His death followed a cancer diagnosis he received this autumn, during the week of his 89th birthday. Bill was born in Seattle on October 11, 1932 to a young housekeeper and an older immigrant carpenter, Peter Asplund. A child of the depression, my Dad had a harsh and difficult childhood. At the age of 12, his family was shattered, and he was sent to a boarding school in Poulsbo. By age 14, he was living on the streets of Fairbanks and Seattle. By wintertime 1946, he and his two younger brothers came to live in Plain with Carl and Gladys Parsons, whom he considered his unofficial foster parents. In 1948, more hard times led to temporary boarding arrangements, eventually living with members of the Baptist Church while attending Lake Stevens High School. While a student there, he met the love of his life, Janice; they were married in 1952, one year after receiving their high school diplomas together. After graduation, Dad began working as a lab technician at Weyerhaeuser in the pulp and paper division in Everett. In 1954 he first attended night school at Everett Community College, and he also took classes at the University of Washington. Later, with Janice's support for their growing family, he enrolled full time at Western Washington College where in June 1961 he graduated with a bachelor's degree in science education. He later went on to earn a master's degree in education at South Dakota School of Mines in 1964. He was always proud that he was named a National Science Foundation Scholar;

it was while in Rapid City that he first grew his iconic beard for the “Prospector Days” summer celebration.

In 1963, after teaching in Brewster for two years, he accepted a teaching position at Wenatchee High School in the science department. It is there he taught chemistry and other science courses until his retirement in 1987.

It was in Wenatchee that Dad honed his mountaineering skills by becoming involved in Alpine Roamers, a climbing club that was active in the Wenatchee Valley in the early 1960’s and 70’s. He summited all of the volcanos in the Washington Cascades and numerous other peaks in Washington State. Dad was a member of Chelan County Mountain Rescue, assisting in numerous rescues and recoveries, and finally as a “call out” coordinator in his later years.

In 1964 Dad was asked to be the advisor of the WHS Forestry Club which he transformed into the Alpine Club. For almost fifteen years, he led the WHS Alpine Club on hiking and climbing trips to many places in the high mountains. With his guidance, the Alpine Club introduced students to backpacking, hiking, winter camping, and climbing in the Cascades, including climbs of Mt Hood, Mt St Helens, and Mt Cashmere.

Dad also worked with the Sunnyslope Church of the Brethren youth group, leading annual week-long backpacks into the Alpine Lakes for many years. He felt that introducing young adults to the beauty of the Cascade Mountains and mountaineering skills was one of his greatest joys in this life.

In 1968, Bill and Janice started selling mountaineering and cross-country gear from their garage to meet the growing interest in outdoor recreation.

“Asplund’s” grew into a premier retail store on N. Wenatchee Avenue specializing in all-season outdoor gear and clothing.

As an early promoter of cross-country skiing in Central Washington, Bill and Janice would rent gear and lead day ski tours in the Blewett Pass area. Bill helped introduce hundreds of people in North Central Washington to cross-country skiing.

It was Dad’s love of the outdoors that led him to support conservation

movements. Initially he promoted the formation of the North Cascades National Park, and later was instrumental in the formation of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area. He was proud to have testified before congressional committees both in Wenatchee and in Washington DC. Dad was also proud to have helped students at WHS organize the first local Earth Day event in 1970. After the closing of their retail store in 2000, Mom and Dad travelled extensively throughout Europe and England. He was fascinated with the early explorers of the Arctic and Antarctica which lead him to adventures to Greenland, Iceland and two trips to Antarctica. In 2008 he took the voyage of a lifetime by traversing the Northwest Passage in a converted Russian icebreaker.

It was only upon the death of his own father in 1965 that Dad learned about his Norwegian family and Nordic heritage. This resulted in many visits during the 1970's and 80's to visit relatives in Molde, Norway. He was proud of his Nordic heritage and was one of the founding members of the Epleдалen Lodge of the Sons of Norway for over fifty years.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, his unofficial foster parents, his wife Janice, brother Bud and son Ron.

Bill is survived by his brother Ken (Norma), his foster brother David Parsons, and by his oldest son, Randy (Cici), four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Due to the current pandemic, an outdoor celebration of Bill's life will be planned later this year.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Chelan Douglas Land Trust, 18 N Wenatchee Ave, Wenatchee, WA 98801.

Condolences may be left at [fjell32@gmail.com](mailto:fjell32@gmail.com). Jones and Jones Funeral Home are handling arrangements.

The family wishes to extend their gratitude to Bill's dear friend Janet, and to Confluence Health Hospice and the caregivers at Avamere Assisted Living, for

all their loving caring and support for Bill during his final days.  
Tusen takk, Bill. Your life was a blessing to us all.

# Tribute Wall

CH

“ To the family of Bill Asplund, My condolences on the loss of Bill. I saw Bill frequently in his work at Asplunds in the 1990s. When Bill find out that I was a new teacher in the community with the Wenatchee School District, it seems that we felt a connection he having taught at Wenatchee High School. I admired in Bill that he was comfortable working to refurbish older equipment, not always pushing customers to buy new stuff. Through his encouragement, he arranged for me to purchase new shoulder straps and a new waist belt to upgrade my Kelty backpack from the 1970s. I recall Bill admiring the quality of the welding of the pack frame, acknowledging that the newer Kelty models were not made to last as long as the older models. Thanks, Bill for your honesty and customer service that you provided as a retailer. Charles (Charlie) Hickenbottom

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**Charles Hickenbottom** - January 29, 2022 at 05:24 PM

MN

“ I was a chemistry student of Bill's his first year at Wenatchee High School. He made an enormous impression on me with his respect to the students, his love of teaching and learning, and the thoughtful way that he introduced me to chemistry. That impression was so strong that I went on to complete a degree and a career in chemistry. Only later, as a young adult, did I come to have a love of the great Pacific Northwest outdoors. Did Bill help with this? Was there an outdoor vibe in his classroom? I don't know but am fascinated by the coincidence.  
My condolences go out to all his family members: the human race has lost the presence of a gentle, kind, loving, and forever curious soul.  
He made my life a better life.

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**Mike Nelson** - January 29, 2022 at 04:43 PM

RA

“ 15 files added to the album *Bill's Photos*



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**Randy Asplund** - January 26, 2022 at 02:12 PM

RS

“ *Bill Asplund was a wonderful man. My sincere condolences to the family.*

*I got to know Bill in the mid 1970s when I took cross-country lessons from him and skied on the old Blewett Pass highway with him and others. I remember he was a kind and patient teacher, loved the woods, and wanted to help others enjoy the outdoors as well.*

*Bill lived a good life by touching the lives of others. His was a life well lived! We need more folks like Bill Asplund!*

*Sincerely,*

*Ron Skagen*

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**Ron Skagen** - January 22, 2022 at 11:20 AM

DD

“ As a WHS student, I did everything possible to avoid taking Biology so I would not dissect frogs, who I used to catch as a child. That was my motivation. I took other natural sciences: electronics, physics and chemistry. Not only did I succeed, the opportunity to meet Mr. Asplund presented itself. Fast forward many decades later, Mr. Asplund ALWAYS remembered me. After he lost his wife, I ran into him at Costco and said, "hi". Now, as a middle-aged woman with all that goes with that season of life, Mr. Asplund still remembered this then skinny chemistry student. He was such a gentle, kind, patient and passionate teacher and man. He was always willing to provide extra time and support to me, his student, and I'm certain many others. He gave to his students and the community, not only as a teacher but as an outdoor enthusiast! Mr. Asplund made a positive difference in the lives of so many, and I am one of those. I applaud his life and celebrate his person! Bravo Mr. Asplund! You lived life well and you will be missed! May his family and close friends sense the Lord holding their hearts and hands during this raw time. I loved, still do and always will, Mr. Asplund!  
Donna Drollinger, then Donna Dietz, former WHS Chemistry student of Mr. Bill Asplund

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Donna Dietz Drollinger - January 20, 2022 at 12:00 AM