



Laurence Arthur Keeler
(2/17/1945 - 7/26/2019)

Larry was born in Yakima on February 17, 1945. He graduated from Davis High School in 1963. He married the love of his life, Jean (Drumright) on September 24, 1966. Held in his wife's embrace, he passed away July 26, 2019 after a valiant battle with esophageal cancer.

He was a Radioman in the United States Coast Guard (USCG) from 1964 -1968. He later joined the USCG Reserves as a Coxswain. For 25 years, he helped maintain over 1,000 aids to navigation on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. He also enjoyed many years of teaching Safe Boating Classes as a member of the USCG Auxiliary.

He earned his BA in Industrial Arts Education from EWU in 1971. He also held an MA in Education from Heritage University.

After teaching in Moses Lake for two years, he taught in the Yakima School District for 30 years. Not one to be known just as "Old Mr. Keeler in Room 5," he taught in 10 schools, in a variety of roles, including 4th grade, 6th grade, elementary PE, reading, writing, driver's education, and wood shop, followed by 17 years as the librarian at Franklin Middle School. He retired in 2001.

His love for the water started at a young age - he owned a boat before he was old enough for a driver's license. He rarely owned just one boat. He spent summers with family and friends boating the PNW inland waters, the Puget Sound, and coastal British Columbia. For a few summers he was a Captain for the Crater Lake National Park tour boats and the Duck Boat tours in Seattle. He was a member of the Queen City Yacht Club in Seattle for 20 years and long time member of the Yakima

Valley Boat Club, where he served as Commodore. One of his proudest accomplishments was earning his Captain's License.

His family and faith in God always came first. He was very involved in his children's and grandchildren's activities, frequently initiating adventures related to their interests. When his mother moved to Living Care, he took on the role of shuttle driver for the retirement home. He spent several years driving the residents to their destinations via unexpected scenic routes. He served as Camp Administrator at First Presbyterian's Camp Ghormley for two summers, much to the delight of his children, who loved living in the forest.

Music brought harmony to his soul. He sang in the Aeolian Choir at Davis, the YVC Singers, First Presbyterian Church Choir, and the Mesa Chapel Choir. As a longtime member of the Yakima Symphony Chorus, he performed in China, Prague, and Vienna. In addition, he and Jean enjoyed attending musical events. When his girls were young, he frequently played the organ to lull them to sleep.

Larry and Jean led an adventurous life including hiking, biking, camping, waterskiing, world travels, boating in Canada, Mexico, England, and Ireland. They enjoyed the last several winters in Mesa, Arizona exploring the natural wonders of the Southwest.

Larry and Jean dock hosted for WA State Parks at Blake Island SP , Mystery Bay SP, and served as Campground host at Fort Flagler State Park. This was an important commitment, starting in 2007. Duties included managing boat traffic in and out of the marina, assisting boats as they docked and departed, maximizing space to allow as many boats as possible to stay, miscellaneous repair/maintenance, selling annual passes and merchandise. We worked closely with the SP Rangers and took our volunteer work very seriously

His hobbies included, you guessed it, boating, as well as woodworking, ham radio, fishing, and tinkering. Exceptionally creative, he could fix anything with whatever he had on hand.

Larry's adventurous spirit, looking over the next horizon, inspired us all. He was always sunny with a smile and a twinkle in his eye. A quiet, thoughtful, warm, gentle soul, his children will always call him their Superhero.

He was preceded in death by his parents Edward and Dorothy Keeler, sister Kathryn McDill, brother Donald Keeler, niece Rebecca McDill and nephew Edward Painter.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Jean, twin daughters Jenna Thompson and Julie Wilske (Jeffrey), and Jacqueline Keeler (Galen Hamilton), sister Denise Coulson (Dave), twin sister Linda Keeler (Frank Campbell), grandchildren Natasha Groenig (Shane), Geneva Hamilton, and Jase Wilske, and great-grandchildren Hudson and Olivia Groenig, nieces Kate McDill (Deb Sweet) and Kris Holt (Dave), and nephews Ken Coulson (Tamara), Kyle Coulson (Catrina), Kevin Coulson, Jeff McDill (Rica), and Quinn McDill.

A memorial will be planned at a later date.