



Duane F. Colwell

March 12, 1928 - November 30, 2010

Duane Francis Colwell passed away at his home on Wenatchee Heights, a mile from where he was born 82 years ago. During his life, he survived one plane crash, two heart attacks, three mother-in-laws, a five-way bypass and nine kids. For most of his early life, he worked on the family apricot and cherry orchard with his parents, Willis Greenleaf and Elsie Pricilla McCue Colwell; his brothers, Tony, Bud and Basil; and his sisters, Deloris and Elsie. All but Deloris have preceded him in death. Duane joined the Army in 1946, and was stationed in Japan with the 11th Airborne Division. In the Army, he refined his talent for boxing and became his Division's Welterweight Champion. After honorably serving his country, he worked at the Hanford Nuclear Site in Richland, WA for five years, before returning to the land he loved. He worked on the family ranch, expanding and growing the orchards, and maintaining an active role in them until he died. He was involved in many agricultural organizations and committees; primary among them was his 17 years with the Washington Grower's Clearing House. Not only was he a man of the land, he was a man of the air. Duane began flying while still in high school, working to buy an hour of flight time, flying, then working and flying, until he earned his private pilot's license. With the mentoring of his best friend and fellow pilot, Junior Carr, his hobby turned into a career. He flew for the forest service fighting fires and then as a crop duster, having only a few minor mishaps and one major one. Along with farming and flying, Duane also worked as a taper and plasterer, usually with his brother, Bud. They were sought out for their

quality work, which can still be seen in many of the Bavarian-style buildings in Leavenworth. Above all, Duane was a family man. He was married to Melva Monroe for ten years, and they had four children. He then married Lila Plith in 1961, and was blessed with two more children. Their life together was tragically cut short by her death in October 1971. In 1972, he married Carmen Malme Edmondson, who added three more children to his tribe. She was his companion and sweetheart for 37 years, and they were able to pursue their passion for the outdoor activities they both loved, such as hunting, fishing and especially, traveling. Whether it was driving through Texas looking for a box canyon he read about in a Louis L'Amore book or getting lost in Germany looking for a historical bridge (that had been blown up in 1945), their life together was an adventure. In September 2008, they were both diagnosed with cancer. She passed from this life in January 2009, after a valiant battle. They left behind nine children who adored them: Steve Colwell, Linda Colwell, Lanai Colwell Mahaffey, Rob Colwell, Debi Edmondson Andre, Jodi Colwell Wright, Kelly Edmondson, Jeff Edmondson and Kevin Colwell; 28 grandchildren; and 30 great-grandchildren; as well as numerous nieces and nephews, friends and colleagues, who will dearly miss him. Although diagnosed with cancer for two years, Duane rarely let it slow him down. He continued to travel from here to the Mexican border, attend annual deer camp and pursue one of his favorite pastimes in the casinos of Washington and Nevada. On November 30, 2010, he passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by family.

The family wishes to thank the kind and loving people at the Wenatchee Valley Clinic Oncology Unit, as well as Central Washington Hospital Hospice staff for their genuine compassion and care for both Duane and Carmen. A special thanks to Sam and Lorna Mitchell, devoted friends and camping companions, for the time and love they so unselfishly shared with Duane and Carmen.

A Funeral Service will be held Friday, December 10, 2010, at 10:30 a.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 625 S. Elliott, Wenatchee. Concluding Services and Interment will follow at the Wenatchee Cemetery. Viewing will be Thursday, December 9, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Duane and Carmen Colwell's name to Central Washington Hospital Hospice, the Washington Grower's Education Trust or the American Cancer Society. Arrangements are by Telford's Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee.