



## William Reed Johnston

May 23, 1924 - February 28, 2014

Reed W. Johnston

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A longtime Wenatchee community and fruit industry leader passed away peacefully at his winter home in Arizona on February 28, 2014. He was 89. One of six children, Reed was born a country boy on May 23, 1924, in a humble, four-room house in the small town of Biggers, AR. Reed exemplified that the measure of success was not where one found themselves at journey's end, but in how many lives were touched along the way. His radiant charm made everyone shine more brightly. The personal standards of dignity embraced his lengthy life with both courage and grace. He always found the intrinsic beauty of life's simple pleasures: work well-done, family and friends well-loved. Virtues of wisdom, integrity, humor, compassion and, most notably, faith, are what he shared so generously.

Raised on a rural farm during the Great Depression, life was often a struggle for his family. In spite of the strain, Reed excelled in school both academically and athletically, therefore becoming a natural leader. With the country on the brink of World War II, he joined the United States Army. He was technically trained at Ohio State University in administration, automotive, artillery leadership, small arms, and graduated in the top ten percent of his class. After

serving three years of combat in the Pacific Theater, he was awarded battle and bronze stars with a number of ribbons for being an integral part of such a monumental achievement. The Johnston family relocated to Wenatchee before he returned from the war. However, his girlfriend, Earlene Wood, remained in Arkansas. Reed sent a one-way train ticket to Earlene and assured to pay her way back if their relationship didn't succeed. Married on May 25, 1946, Reed and Earlene soon nourished a loving family with the same sense of commitment, joy, and passion that they bestowed on one another. For 57 years, they shared a loving marriage until Earlene passed away September 2, 2002.

Reed worked at Wenoka Growers as a storage and shipping foreman for three years. Subsequently, his career included 37 years at Welch Apples Incorporated, where he was the General Manager for 15 years, Corporation President, and Corporate Executive Officer for ten years. During his tenure there, he obtained electrical and refrigeration degrees. He developed the ability to store loose golden delicious apple bins in a room with controlled atmosphere, which was an instrumental advancement in future warehouse modeling. In 1983, he was hired by Stemilt Growers as Vice President of grower relations, followed by General Manager of Stemilt Management Incorporated. At 65 years old and with 43 years in every facet of the fruit industry, he was hired in 1989 as President and Chief Executive Officer of Pacific Fruit Growers, Packers and Shippers Incorporated. With plants in both Wenatchee and Yakima, it was the largest independent company in Washington. After retiring in 1995, he then founded Johnston Consulting Company, with clients including Bank of California. Reed's success was attributed to his intelligence, hard work, honesty, and a sense of fairness for all those with whom he worked.

He was a member of the First United Methodist Church since 1967. Reed was Lay Leader, Chairman of the Administration Board, Chairman of Trustees, and

involved in Habitat for Humanity. Earlene and he opened their home to numerous prayer meetings and baptisms. They also attended lay witness missions and administered to the sick in both hospitals and rest homes. The countless acts of kindness he exhibited through community service were extraordinary. Reed was a member of Rotary Club since 1970. There, he became a Paul Harris Fellow, chaired many committees including, President of the Foundation, Fellowship Classification, Sergeant-At-Arms, Chaplain, and Inter Club. He was on the Board of Wenatchee Valley College, North Central Washington Museum Board and President of the Wenatchee Valley Traffic Association. Having been a member of the Salvation Army Board since 1966, he served as Chairman for six years and received the Outback Reward, which is given to less than ten percent of all board members in the United States.

On October 3, 2004, he married Ileen Taylor. Her love, support, and companionship propelled him, along with family, through the final years of a long, prosperous life.

Reed was preceded in death by his wife, Earlene Johnston; infant daughter, Connie Johnston; parents, Earl and Ella Johnston; brothers, Earl Jr. Johnston, Neil Johnston, Charlie Johnston, and Harold Johnston; sister, Geneveive Paine; and son-in-law, Garland Long. He is survived by his wife, Ileen Johnston; daughters, Diane Boehle (William), and Carol Johnston; grandsons, Justin Boehle (Robin), David Boehle (Julia), and John Martin; granddaughter, Anna Doughty (Kris); great-grandchildren, Brody Beeman, Carolina Doughty, and Calvin Boehle; step-children, Roger Taylor (April), Brian Taylor, and Leslie Martin; step-grandchildren, Jonathan Taylor, Kelli Taylor, and Pamela Kone (Denny); step-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

A Service will be held at the First United Methodist Church, 941 Washington Street, Wenatchee on Friday, March 14, 2014, at 1:30 p.m. Concluding

Services and Interment will follow at the Wenatchee City Cemetery. Visitation will be held on Thursday, March 13, 2014, from 11:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Telford's Chapel of the Valley in East Wenatchee. The family suggests that donations be made to The Children's Bible Fund at the First United Methodist Church. Arrangements are by Telford's Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee.