



Edgar Lewis Buttram

July 29, 1920 - August 22, 2010

Edgar Lewis Buttram passed away peacefully on Sunday evening, August 22, 2010. He had lived in Seattle for decades before moving to Marlin, Washington, where he recently celebrated his 90th birthday surrounded by relatives and friends.

Edgar was born on July 29, 1920 to William and Hester Buttram of Jane, Missouri. One of five children, he spent his adolescence pounding nails and helping out in the family's grocery store. For a time during the Great Depression, his father William made ends meet by selling washing machines off the back of his truck. William travelled the dusty roads of New Mexico and Texas pitching a payment plan to the rare housewives who could consider such a luxury. Edgar's father would return home only when he needed to load up two more washing machines.

Such difficult times taught the young Edgar to break the ice with a smile. Self-educated beyond high school, he also learned carpentry, some math, and the skill to assert his opinion without aggravating others. He met the love of his life, Alvild Vallevik, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "Ed and Al," as they were known, were married May 17, 1940. Ed enlisted in the Air Force and was stationed in Sacramento during World War II. The couple's first daughter, Betty Jo, was born July 12, 1944. Son Gary Michael arrived Jan. 8, 1946, after the family had transitioned to the Fort Lewis area near Tacoma.

After mustering out of the service, Ed applied for unemployment with the State

-- but instead of benefits he was offered a position with the Department of Unemployment. He accepted the ground-floor job as a data processing analyst and moved the family to Olympia. Daughter Susan Diane was born June 26, 1951.

In 1956 Edgar's job was transformed into a career when he accepted Boeing's offer to make him a computer systems analyst in Seattle. Ed and Al bought the house on Fourth Avenue Southwest, and lived there together for the next 51 years. They worked hard, and counted every penny, but also travelled the United States and Europe. They read books and kept up with current events, and they enjoyed dancing, playing cards, and throwing the house open to the entire family several times a year.

Ed retired from Boeing to his easy chair in 1982, happy to soak up the love of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He enjoyed lively companionship playing pinochle and whist at the Eagles Hall and the White Center and Burien senior centers -- where he was always ready to contribute a story or a joke. Al, of course, was his constant companion and keeper. For many years Edgar was also a weekly fixture at the White Center Food Bank, volunteering his labor and his pickup truck.

Edgar and Alvild were predeceased by their daughter Betty Jo Gonzalez, who was taken in a tragic 1984 car accident.

Ed and Al rarely spent a day apart in 67 years of marriage, but were finally separated when Al passed away Oct. 17, 2007. Edgar was also predeceased by sister Hester Mae Buttram and brothers Billie Jay Buttram and John H. Buttram. He is survived by sister Wilma Wilson, daughter Susan, son Michael, grandson Victor Manuel Gonzalez, granddaughter Jennifer Johnson, and great-grandchildren Jacqueline, Brendan, and Collin.

He was an honest and good-hearted man who was never as serene as when sitting with a happy child perched on his knee. We loved him and we miss

him.

A private family memorial service will be held in Moses Lake, Washington.