



## John S. Townsend Jr.

September 15, 2024

John S. Townsend, Jr.

On Sunday, September 15, 2024, John S. Townsend, Jr. passed peacefully at his home in Moses Lake, Washington. With him were his long-time companion and members of his family.

John was born in 1930 in Jordan Valley, Oregon, when his parents were living and working near Silver City, Idaho. John was the oldest of John and Sybil Townsend's five children. After John's birth, the Townsends farmed near Tuttle, Idaho, but lost the farm when a windstorm destroyed their crop.

In 1938, the family moved to Silver City. John's father worked in the mine and his mother was the sole teacher at the school. The family bought a cow and it was John's responsibility to milk it twice a day and deliver the milk to some of their neighbors. Silver City received a lot of snow each year and John said it was very cold delivering that milk.

When the mine closed in 1941, they moved to Hagerman, Idaho, just down the road from Tuttle, to work Sybil's parents' farm. There John's three siblings, his maternal grandfather and his uncle along with his parents, all lived in a two-room house. It was so crowded that John and his younger brother Edgar slept in an old car body. In the winter they would snuggle to keep warm. A fifth

child would be born after the family moved into a larger house.

At age 14, John developed an infection in his right hip which left him bedridden. Doctors were unsure how to treat it and he was hospitalized in Boise, Idaho for about six months. When penicillin became available after the war, it finally cleared the infection, but the damage was done and his hip was destroyed. Doctors fused his femur to his hip at an angle so he could both stand and sit, but this left him with a pronounced limp. About forty years later, he was able to get his first hip replacement surgery which greatly improved his mobility.

In 1948, unable to be drafted because of his hip, John attended the University of Idaho in Moscow studying chemistry. There he met his future wife, Alice Compton of Blackfoot, Idaho. They were married in Blackfoot in 1952.

John worked in the potato processing industry most of his career. He worked in Blackfoot and Idaho Falls, Idaho until 1978. His career culminated with the purchase of Western Polymer in Moses Lake, Washington in the early 80s. He turned the business around and made it successful in a few short months.

Alice and John had three children: Michael John Townsend in 1954, Lynn Marie Townsend-White in 1956, and Sheldon Evan Townsend in 1960, all of Moses Lake, Washington.

John was active in Rotary most of his adult life, up until 2020. He also served as a member of the Board for the Big Bend Community College Foundation for twenty-six years, from 1995 – 2021. The Foundation provides scholarships, books, and emergency assistance to financially assist students in their goal of earning a degree or certificate.

When John was younger, he enjoyed fishing and hunting. The family would go

on adventures that were called "Sunday stucks" when the entire Townsend clan would pile in the car after church and drive into the mountains around Blackfoot until the car could go no farther, having been stuck. John also enjoyed visiting family members such as his sisters and his brother and their families in addition to numerous cousins.

John is survived by his long-time companion, Betty Gard, his children Mike (Becki), Lynn (Alan), and Sheldon (Lynn), his younger brother Edgar (Barbara) Townsend of Moscow, Idaho, and his former wife, Alice (Wayne) McAlexander of Moses Lake. He has eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents and his sisters, Gwendolyn Townsend Thorne, Charlotte Townsend Allen, and Lenora Townsend Pepin.

A memorial service will be held at Moses Lake Christian Church, 200 Yonezawa Blvd, Moses Lake, Washington, on Saturday, October 12th, 2024 at 11 am.

To honor John's memory, donations may be made to the BBCC Foundation by check payable to BBCC Foundation and mailed to 7662 Chanute Street NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837 or at [www.bigbend.edu/i-am/give-now/](http://www.bigbend.edu/i-am/give-now/)

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

OCT **12**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Moses Lake Christian Church  
200 E. Yonezawa Blvd.  
Moses Lake, WA

# Tribute Wall

KS

“ It was my pleasure to serve on the BBCC Foundation Board with John. There was still some residual “farm boy” left in John—he never failed to ask me how farming was going in Adams County and what crops we were growing. What a fine, generous and benevolent gentleman John was; he will be missed! Katherine Franz Swinger

Katherine Franz Swinger - September 25, 2024 at 09:55 PM

ME

“ He achieved so much but left behind the greatest legacy possible - Children that know Jesus, serve their children, and serve their community. Thank you John.

Marv Evans - September 24, 2024 at 08:22 PM

J Neil  
Evans

“ Thank you for the memories! John and Alice babysat me and my brothers and sisters in Blackfoot. We were on some of those stuck Sunday rides. Our families had lots of picnics and dinners together. The Townsends are special friends. God Bless you all as you remember John. We will be at our Evans family reunion in Tennessee on Oct 12 so will sadly miss the service remembering John. I have a picture of an old cabin on the cover of a book I wrote. I took the picture on John's property near Silver City. One of my regrets is that I never had the opportunity to have John give me a tour of the area. We did search for and find a number of Townsend tombstones in Silver city. He lived a full life. Thank you for the memories!  
Neil Evans

J Neil Evans - September 24, 2024 at 01:18 AM

AG

“ I and my family were very blessed to be so connected to the Townsend family during many years in Blackfoot and beyond. John and my father Jack Evans brought us together through their work but the families meshed and grew bonds for lifetimes. I grew up knowing I would always find a loving welcome in their home. I'm sure my Mom and Dad were happy to see John when he crossed the river to his eternal home. Lord, bless each of John's children and give them Your peace.

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**Anita Evans Gunter** - September 23, 2024 at 05:06 PM