



Robert "Mel" Olson

July 22, 1928 - July 3, 2018

Robert Mel Olson, 89, passed away July 3, 2018 in Moses Lake, WA. Mel was born on July 22, 1928 in Yakima. He was preceded in death by his Parents, John and Edna, and brother John. He is survived by his spouse of nearly 70 years, Vicki, daughters Pam Sharp(David), Kennewick, and Jan Jordan(Alan), Richland, and grandchildren, Jaime Sharp, Hailey, ID, Erik Sharp, Kennewick, Kris and Scott Jordan, Richland, and Jesse Jordan of Copperas Cove, TX , and six great-grandchildren. He was a devoted husband and father.

Mel grew up in Yakima graduating from Davis High School, later graduating with honors at WSU with a degree in Education. At WSU he was on the collegiate swimming and diving team and Captain of the cheerleading squad. He was also in ROTC and later served in the Korean War as a captain in the infantry. He was decorated with a Bronze Star with Valor and a Purple Heart.

Mel came to Moses Lake in 1955, teaching at Chief Moses until his retirement in 1981. He taught physical education and was wrestling and football coach. He coached numerous future state and national wrestling champions. He was instrumental in starting the youth wrestling program in the 1950's, which later underpinned the wrestling dominance of Moses Lake High School.

Mel was an icon for Moses Lake High sports. He was known as the "Voice of the Chiefs" for his 50 years of broadcasting Moses Lake Wrestling, Football,

and Basketball with his very able assistant Vicki. He was not just a broadcaster. He talked with and knew the individual participants and coaches. His broadcasts were riveting. He was very proud of the Moses Lake community and their sports teams. During his years teaching, coaching, and mentoring, and later in retirement, he touched and gave life lessons to thousands of Moses Lake youth, sometimes across three generations of the same family.

Mel participated in many other activities including being a nationally ranked water skier and judge, American Water Ski Association member emeritus, 25 years on the National Ski Patrol, Emergency Medical Technician, Japanese Agricultural Exchange Program, Moses Lake Sports Hall of Fame and board member, Washington State Wrestling Hall of Fame, Inland Empire Hall of Fame, National Wrestling Hall of Fame, and Ranger 20 National Sailing Champion. In his later years, he became an avid bike rider as it allowed him to exercise and be free of restrictions from his war injuries.

Private family graveside services were held at Pioneer Memorial Gardens. Kayser's Chapel is handling arrangements. A Celebration of Mel Olson's Life will be held at 2 p.m., Thursday, July 26th at 2 pm at Moses Lake High School, in the Chief Gym.

Cemetery Details

Pioneer Memorial Gardens

14403 Rd. 2 Ne
Moses Lake, WA

Previous Events

Service

JUL **26.** 2:00 PM (PT)

Moses Lake High School
Moses Lake, WA

Tribute Wall

BR

“ *Rest in peace coach. You were an inspiration to all of us.*

Bob Russell

Bob Russell - July 27, 2018 at 11:06 AM

 Rocky
Oishi

“ *I can remember his energetic way of talking and cheerful personality. The news came to me as a great shock; I pray for his soul and his surviving family with my sincere condolences. Rest in peace.*

Rocky Oishi - July 25, 2018 at 11:35 PM

TY

“ *It is so sad and I get near to tears when I think that I can't see him and can't talk to him anymore, but I want to say 'What a wonderful life he enjoyed!'. I could not think of any negative images of him and his family. He was always happy and eager to encourage young people with his vigorous style. I would like to toast to his precious and happy life.*

The first time I met him was when I was a JATP trainee in 1980 and he was our PE instructor. His impression to the most of the Japanese trainees was very uniquely positive that we had not met or seen in our whole lives before. It is not only myself but so many trainees who were influenced by his nice and positive character and started thinking the one's life should be his way. He was a more than the PE instructor for us. He will be missed by so many friends not only in the US but also in Japan. Please, please rest in peace, Mr. Olson.

TJ Yoshikawa

TJ Yoshikawa - July 22, 2018 at 10:41 PM

SC

“ My condolences to Vicki and her family... Mel will be missed by many. He was a great enthusiastic supporter of the JATP program and I always enjoyed seeing Vicki and Mel at our Welcoming ceremony and farewell picnic. The trainees loved him and enjoyed his classes. RIP Mel.

Sandy Cheek - July 20, 2018 at 09:01 PM



“ Dear Mrs. Vicki Olson,

On receiving the news of the passing of your husband, Mr. Robert Mel Olson, we would like to express our sincere condolences. Although we cannot be present at this time of mourning, our prayers are with you, your family and friends.

He taught us not just English at B.B.C.C. but how we should be approaching our lives by telling us "It's up to you." or "Anata-shidaidesu" in Japanese. He was a remarkable athlete, as well as a great mentor to all the Japanese agricultural trainees learn from him. We all miss him.

Sincerely,

Yuuichi Aihara, Chair

The Ehime Pref. International Agricultural Exchange Council

?? ?? - July 20, 2018 at 07:58 PM

KM

“ *Our Hearts are with your Family at this Time.
My Dad thought the world of Mel.*

*Alan McKay
Katherine McKay Molyneux*



Katherine McKay Molyneux - July 19, 2018 at 04:16 PM



“ *I don't forget the day we have spent with you.
I don't forget the things you have taught us.
Thank you, Mel Olson.*

*You are in my heart all the time.
Tomohiro Sugiura, JATP group 92-1 Trainee*

Tomohiro Sugiura - July 11, 2018 at 06:36 AM

RS

“ *Thanks to Mr. Mel Olson, I had really good time during the time of
the JAT trainee and JAEC staff in USA.
I really appreciate his gentle approach to have become a big fan of
USA.
I would like to express my deep sincere condolence to Mel's sudden
death.
It was really regrettable very much that I had been out of
communication with Mel and Vicki for a long time now. Ryoji
Sakamoto, Tokyo, Japan*

Ryoji Sakamoto - July 10, 2018 at 05:13 AM

DS

“ I have known Mel for over 60 ears. He gave me swimming lessons, was my PE teacher, wrestling and football coach, and I am proud to be his son-in-law. He was a great man who positively touched many people, particularly young people in Moses Lake, myself included. He made learning fun. He was an icon of Moses Lake sports. He was loved by many and he will be missed, but he will never be forgotten.

David Sharp

David Sharp - July 10, 2018 at 03:11 AM

TC

“ Troy Cox lit a candle in memory of Robert "Mel" Olson



Troy Cox - July 09, 2018 at 04:14 PM

JF

“ He was a great man. He was fun to listen to. Especially when something big or exciting was happening. You could feel the energy of the game or match even if you couldn't be there in person. Thanks for your service to our youth. You made the world a better place. RIP

jessie Fredericksen - July 08, 2018 at 10:55 PM

BM

“ Lots of good memories of Mel & Vickie over the years. Tremendous loss to his family & the Moses Lake community. RIP, Mel. Barry & Holly Moos

Barry & Holly Moos - July 07, 2018 at 11:53 AM

BA

“ Coach Olson was my favorite teacher and coach. He was a big influence in my life. He had a special way of motivating me to do my best and believe in myself. He was a huge part of Moses Lake wrestling as a coach. He gave his junior high wrestlers the foundation they needed to succeed at the high school level and become champions in life. He motivated me to always be the best person I could be both on and off the field. Many of the things he taught me back in junior high I used as a teacher and coach in my own career. He took the time to teach me how to water ski one summer which is one of my fondest memories. My heart goes out to his family as they face such a sudden and unexpected loss. Rest In Peace Coach Olson, you were the best!
Bob Adamson and the Adamson Family

Bob Adamson - July 06, 2018 at 11:44 PM

LP

“ The best sports coverage on radio that I have ever heard! I always knew what was going on when I would listen to the games or wrestling matches. May your Family be filled with peace at this time of your loss 🙏🌹🙏

Linda Duvall Phillips - July 06, 2018 at 08:08 PM

LR

“ Pam, David, Vicki, and family - We are so sorry to read of Mel's passing. He and your entire family were always a blessing to Moses Lake. Thank you for sharing him with all of us from Moses Lake and the Columbia Basin.

Larry & Katie Rigsby, Kennewick

LARRY RIGSBY - July 06, 2018 at 08:07 PM

ML

“ How many lives did this wonderful man touch in all of the years he taught, coached announced and contributed. I had him for PE, football, wrestling, swimming lessons and not once did I not learn something new each day. He taught me many valuable life lessons and had a huge impact on who I am today. RIP coach, thank you.

Michael Long - July 06, 2018 at 07:48 PM

ML

“ Michael Long lit a candle in memory of Robert "Mel" Olson



Michael Long - July 06, 2018 at 07:44 PM

JM

“ Jessie Menchaca lit a candle in memory of Robert "Mel" Olson



Jessie Menchaca - July 06, 2018 at 04:22 PM

RH

“ *Mr. Olson made many of us the men and women we are today. Thanks Mel, for caring so much for so many. You will live eternally by the men and women you produced, their children, and grandchildren.*

Roger Holloway - July 06, 2018 at 01:02 PM

BG

“ *Barbara Gangnath-Wills lit a candle in memory of Robert "Mel" Olson*



Barbara Gangnath-Wills - July 06, 2018 at 02:22 AM



“ *Denise Hancock lit a candle in memory of Robert "Mel" Olson*



Denise Hancock - July 05, 2018 at 09:29 PM



“ *Mr. Olson was a real nice man and the golden voice of the airwaves for MLHS! He taught school with my dad Mr. Hauff at CMJS! He will never be forgotten in Moses Lake as he is Legendary! My Condolences to his family & many friends*

Denise Hancock - July 05, 2018 at 09:28 PM

GL

“ Wonderful man and family. Loved to have our wrestling matches on the radio

glen - July 05, 2018 at 07:58 PM

WS

“ Wendy S. lit a candle in memory of Robert "Mel" Olson



Wendy S. - July 05, 2018 at 02:51 PM

FC

He will be missed by many. Fran

Fran Christensen - July 05, 2018 at 03:25 PM

BB

Our deepest condolences to you all. I had Mel as a teacher and a coach at Chief Mo. We remember the water ski tournaments, seeing him at Mission Ridge doing ski patrol and most recently enjoying his visits as he rode by the house on his bike. He was a special man.

Bob and Sharon Bernd - July 06, 2018 at 04:55 PM

LM

I always looked up to Coach Mel. Thank you for 'pushing' us to our abilities.

Larry Major - July 06, 2018 at 07:16 PM

ML

Mel Olson was one of the greats. He taught life. He taught us what to think about and ponder during the national anthem before football games. He taught us about citizenship and love for our parents and community. He knew how to be serious and for sure he knew how to have fun. My entire family loved Mel.

Mark Lybbert

Mark Lybbert - July 09, 2018 at 03:26 AM

TC

Thank you for your dedication, passion and love for the young people; in the most important time of his/her journey to adulthood. The memories that you provided and the examples you showed; help guide every "Chief" in this world. No matter where we are now. Mr. Olsen, Thank you for the Friday Night Lights, The Saturday Skiing, and the support during the Sister City Exchange Program. Rest In Peace Sir and Thank You For Being a Shining Star For All To Witness.

Troy Cox

Troy Cox - July 09, 2018 at 04:12 PM

MS

I was Mel Olson's student. I graduated in 1963. The last time I saw Mr. Olson was at the 50th Class Reunion in 2013. I spoke to him and he remembered me. It was a pleasure to see a former teacher. He was always passionate with his work. I am glad I got to see and talk to him.

Sincerely,

Michael Smith, Class of 1963, Moses Lake High School

Michael R. Smith - July 11, 2018 at 08:25 PM

PR

Deepest sympathy to Vicki - keep riding won't you?

Melo was an inspiration to many people on Bike Journal. Thanks for your example Mel, I will always aspire to ride as much as you did in your later years!

Sincerely,

Perry Raison (Perth Western Australia)

Perry Raison - July 13, 2018 at 07:31 AM



Will the circle be unbroken!

from group Q Trainee Doc

Tennis Ball juggling was the first lesson that I learned at the JATP PE class. I couldn't do well, though.

But we all enjoy the class all the time.

And now, I am a junior sports club instructor, I always remember his smile. And he is my real teacher.

Please rest in peace.

Hiroshi Nishimura - July 23, 2018 at 12:59 PM