



## Roy "Buck" Wheat

October 30, 1927 - February 25, 2022

Roy J (Buck) Wheat Jr, at the age of 94, peacefully took-off from this life and flew his last flight to the big airfield and hangar in heaven on February 25th at home in Moses Lake, WA. His loving wife Dee, his daughters Cindy Gender and Susie Courtright and her husband John, were by his side.

Buck was born October 30, 1927, in Bothell, Washington. He was the second oldest of six and graduated from Bothell High School in 1946.

He was a professional pilot, instructor, and mentor in all aspects of aviation as well as a valuable member of his community wherever he lived.

In 1946, Buck enlisted in the US Air Force. Being enthusiastic about learning anything he could about the mechanics of any kind of flying, he enrolled as a high school graduate for "Cadet Pilot Training" at Randolph Field, TX where he began his journey to learn how to fly numerous aircraft. He moved up to 2nd Lieutenant and transferred to Shaw Field, SC where he continued training in a Republic F84, Twin-engine DC3 and C47, along with dive bombing, rocketry, ground gunnery and air combat. Later he was transferred to Elmendorf Air Base in Anchorage, AK where he flew F80's with a combat squadron. In 1950, Buck was transferred to McChord Air Force Base, Tacoma, WA. As a 1st Lieutenant, he entered the US Air Force Reserve. He was honorably discharged in 1957 but continued as a reservist until 1967. While still in the service in 1949, there was a severe winter with a blizzard cutting off civilians and cattle in Karney, NE. Cattle ranchers were in danger of losing entire herds needing feed. The military asked for help, so Buck

volunteered to fly a military C47 to fly feed to starving cattle. That same week he flew a civilian T-craft airplane with skis to land on snow fields to deliver food to a rancher's family that had been isolated by the snow.

From 1950 to 1953, Buck worked for Boeing for a short period of time. He then went to AZ to begin his career as a flight instructor and crop-dusting pilot for Lazy Eight Flight Service. In 1953 he went to work for Central aircraft in Yakima as a crop duster. Buck flew in Peru for a time and was also hired to spray for budworm in New Brunswick, Canada, flying Stearmans.

In 1957, Buck met the love of his life Dee, they married in 1958. In this same year, they started a flying operation called Aircraft Applicators, Inc in Prosser WA. The Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) approved his business for flight instruction, air ambulance, glider instruction and crop-dusting agricultural crops. Buck used his skills as a master mechanic to help build a Ferris Wheel and a "box ride" for the Prosser City Park. Buck enjoyed crop dusting over the Horse Heaven Hills and had fond memories of working with many of the farmers in this area.

In 1962, Buck and his family moved to Richland where he initiated a new business, the Richland Flying Service. The airport had been closed to civilian use by the US Atomic Energy Commission since the 1940's. The FAA approved the business for flight instruction, air ambulance, float plane, gliders, sky diver and aircraft maintenance. Buck also volunteered with many air search and rescues for local authorities, put on airshows and invested hours in the communities of both Richland and later in Moses Lake, WA.

In 1969, Buck moved his family to Moses Lake where he accepted a flight instructor and advisor position in the new aviation program at Big Bend Community College. Over the years, Buck prepared numerous students for careers in aviation. Buck took a personal interest in his students and was often found helping them after hours in a "hobby shop" that he started on campus for working on their vehicles and various other projects.

In 1979 Buck retired from BBCC and moved to Yakima, WA where he restored "bush" planes used for flying in AK. In 1990 Buck and Dee returned to Moses

Lake and began restoring a Stearman in his shop. For 6 months out of the year they went to their home in Sun City West, AZ where he was active in the Experimental Aircraft Association, he became an advisor and counselor in both WA and AZ.

One of Buck's 1973 BBCC graduates took his flying career to NASA and became an astronaut. In 2009, Greg Johnson invited Buck and Dee to attend the launching of the Space Shuttle Atlantis at Cape Canaveral, FL for its flight to the Hubble Space Station, piloted by Greg. They were given VIP treatment in recognition as the man who went above and beyond his job to share his knowledge and passion of flying with his students. Buck loved staying in touch with his many flight students over the years and felt very blessed to have been a small part of their lives.

He built a legacy of helping others and encouraging young people to learn to fly through his passion and knowledge of flying. Every community he has lived in has benefitted from his many hours of sharing his talents and expertise and selfless giving. In Buck's own words, "I have logged well over 35,000 flying hours of rewarding joy." His reward has always been helping someone solve a problem, building something, and creating a community of giving back to each other.

Buck was rated in single and multi-engine land and sea, glider and instrument, helicopter, hot air balloon and was a Certified Flight Instructor for all of the above. He was also a Certified Aircraft & Powerplant Mechanic and built and restored many aircraft over the years.

Buck served on many aviation boards and was honored in 2012 when he received the Wall of Honor plaque for his outstanding community service from Northshore School District in Bothell, WA. In 2018 the Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration presented Buck with The Wright Brother's "Master Pilot" Award for dedicated service, technical expertise, professionalism, and many outstanding contributions to further aviation safety. In addition, they awarded him with a 50-year plaque of

dedicated service to aviation.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Margaret and Roy Wheat Sr., his sister Betty Wheat-Boyd and his brother Bill Wheat. His son, Capt. Scot Wheat was killed in an airplane accident in Alaska in 1985 where he flew for Era Airlines.

Buck is survived by his loving wife Dee of 64 years, his son Jay Wheat of FL, daughter Cindy Gender of AZ, daughter Susie Courtright and husband John of Moses Lake. His sister Roberta Wheat-Taipale of ID, his brother Larry Wheat of Moses Lake and sister Gerry Wheat-Eagle of Bothell. Buck was a proud Grandpa and will be dearly missed by his seven grandchildren: Jarrett Wheat, Scot Courtright, Thomas Courtright, Aubrey Gender Babst, Jake Courtright, Preston Gender and Tyler Courtright and his seven great grandchildren.

The family would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Michael Graham and Dr. Jan Vetter for their wonderful care of Buck over these past several years.

We would also like to thank the Moses Lake Alliance Church for all of their love and support. Maryann, Justin, Erin, Victoria and Pastor Michael from Assured Hospice for their compassionate care and guidance to our family.

Memorials can be made to the Scot Wheat Memorial Fund at Big Bend Community College Foundation, 7662 Chanute St NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837 or by clicking the link below:

[https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.bigbend.edu%2ffoundation-ways-to-give%2f&c=E,1,lb1qO1sUNvU1\\_KZIXqaWzKGFw6yjAyHZfIEgVLy\\_uaVQSG3mmR8pST8oo1vaFXfG4noSx5XMytxvdt8xUhSA\\_SHigxjEKAaojJRfnnvQuhXBla3gB70,&typo=1](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.bigbend.edu%2ffoundation-ways-to-give%2f&c=E,1,lb1qO1sUNvU1_KZIXqaWzKGFw6yjAyHZfIEgVLy_uaVQSG3mmR8pST8oo1vaFXfG4noSx5XMytxvdt8xUhSA_SHigxjEKAaojJRfnnvQuhXBla3gB70,&typo=1)

A celebration of his life will be held on March 12th at 12:00 in the afternoon at the Moses Lake Alliance Church, 1100 N. Grape Dr., Moses Lake, WA.

# Cemetery Details

## Guarding Angels Cemetery

2595 Road L N.E.  
Moses Lake, WA 98837  
(509) 765-7848

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

MAR 12. 12:00 PM (PT)

Moses Lake Alliance Church  
1100 N. Grape Dr.  
Moses Lake, WA

# Tribute Wall

MS

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Mary Shinn** - March 04, 2022 at 03:15 PM

DW

*Mary and Stephanie, we are so very blessed by this Memorial Flight for Buck! We thank you for your thoughtfulness and an amazing tribute to him. The Wheat Family*

**Delores Wheat** - March 18, 2022 at 11:49 AM

MC

“ *Sending condolences,prayers,love,and hug's to Roy J ( Buck ) Wheat family .  
Lord Jesus comfort your hearts.  
Ps Buck's story is so very bunches absolutely precious. ❤️*

**Mary Lou Cedillo** - March 01, 2022 at 01:42 PM



“ 4 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Kayser's Chapel of Memories** - March 01, 2022 at 12:19 PM