



William E. "Al" Bjork

June 22, 1920 - June 15, 2008

William Elbert "Al" Bjork passed away on June 15, 2008 at the age of 87. He was born on a farm in Greeley County, Kansas on June 22, 1920, the eldest son of Charles William and Ellen Victoria (Bergquist) Bjork. He moved to Washington state with his family at the age of 16 and graduated from high school in Vancouver, Wash. in 1939. After graduation from high school, he was employed as a florist and also worked as a core sawyer for the Vancouver Plywood Company. On August 15, 1940, he was married to Alta Vera Green of Vancouver with whom he had graduated from high school. During World War II, Al enlisted and served in the United States Navy where he rose to the rank of Boatswain Mate First Class and was honorably discharged in November of 1945, after serving aboard the USS Wenatchee in the Pacific. After returning home from the war, Al, Alta and Billy took a trip to Moses Lake to visit Gladys and Cecil Gilman, a couple they had met in Pasco. Al was offered a job in Moses Lake, so the young family returned to Vancouver, loaded up their belongings and moved to Moses Lake on January 18, 1946. Al started his career in law enforcement on April 1, 1946 as the second member of the two-man Moses Lake Police Department. One year later he was appointed as the first Chief of Police in Moses Lake, a position he held for 26 years. From 1959 to 1973 Al also served as secretary/treasurer of the Washington Association of Chiefs of Police, and then for the merged Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. Chief Bjork was one of the great pushers behind law enforcement training in the State of Washington

during the 1950s and 1960s. He also placed a great emphasis on communications. When he first started in law enforcement blue lights on top of telephone poles in Moses Lake indicated the need for a policeman. These lights were activated by telephone operators when they received a call for police assistance and the policeman on foot patrol was expected to call the telephone operator for details. In October 1973 Al was appointed as the first director for the Washington State Gambling Commission. He held this appointment until his retirement in 1980.

Al was a member of numerous social and civic organizations, including: American Legion, Lions Club, Elks Lodge, Boy Scouts of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was also a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Moses Lake and served as Deacon and Elder.

He was also active in the Masonic Lodge and Eastern Star.

Over the years, Al was recognized many times for his service and leadership in law enforcement and to his community, state and nation. In 1973 Al was awarded the prestigious National J. Edgar Hoover Gold Medal by the United States Veterans of Foreign Wars in cooperation with the FBI. The award is given in recognition of outstanding abilities, compassion, integrity, honor and public service.

Following his retirement in 1980, Al and Alta purchased property on the Twisp River and built their own log home. They enjoyed the summer months at their beautiful site on the Twisp River and spent the winter month in Yuma, Ariz. In 1995 they moved back to Moses Lake and continued to spend the winter months in Yuma. Al loved to golf and was on the course with his friends several times a week in Yuma. Al and Alta enjoyed traveling, exploring their family genealogy and square dancing. Most of all, Al loved times spent with his family and being involved in the lives of his grandchildren. He believed in the value of education throughout his work life, and instilled that value to his children and grandchildren.

Al is survived by his three sons and their families, William E. "Bill" Bjork, Jr. and wife Janet, son Dale Bjork and wife Rita, son Dennis Bjork and wife Karen

all of Moses Lake. Grandchildren William E. Bjork III and wife Janeen, Becky Palmer and husband Jeff, Derek Bjork, wife Jessica and Al's first great-grandson Basil Michael, Brad Bjork, Bryan Bjork and Kristin Bjork. He is also survived by three sisters, Wilma McDonnell of Eugene, Ore., Emilene and husband LeRoy Carlson of Woodinville, Wash., Luella Anderson of Kulm, N. Dakota and numerous nieces and nephews. Bev Meyer of Pullman was a very special friend to Al during the last five years of his life.

Al was preceded in death by Alta in September 2002, their son, Alvern in December 1951, his parents, two brothers and one sister.

Graveside services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 21 at Pioneer Memorial Gardens. Memorial services will follow at 11 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Moses Lake, 1142 West Ivy Street, Moses Lake, Wash. with Pastor Eric Frey officiating.

If desired, donations may be made to the Moses Lake Police Benefit Association, P.O. Box 1579, Moses Lake WA 98837.

Previous Events

Service

JUN **21**. 10:00 AM.

Graveside

Service

JUN **21**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Moses Lake Presbyterian Church
1142 W. Ivy
Moses Lake, WA

Tribute Wall



“ Dear Family,

I am especially touched by your sorrow since I just lost Myron two months ago. I was so glad Al could be at his memorial, as Myron considered him his best friend.

Al will be missed by everyone in Moses Lake but especially by his Monroe House family.

With deepest regards,

*Liz Sutherland##imported-begin##Mrs. Myron
Sutherland##imported-end##*

June 21, 2008 at 09:23 PM



“ *With heartfelt sympathy to the families.*

*With love, Wilma, Cheri, Vicki, and Charles##imported-
begin##Wilma McDonnell##imported-end##*

June 21, 2008 at 05:38 PM



“ *Bjork Family:*

*I have known Al for over 30 years. My father who is also a retired Sheriff knew Al in the 60's when they both worked hard to make the Washington State Sheriff's and Chief's Association more professional. My father said yesterday "Al was a great Law Enforcement professional and was respected by all Chiefs and Sheriffs in this state. I talked many times to Al at the Monroe House about the old days in Law Enforcement. He will be greatly missed by the Wiester Family and all persons that knew him.##imported-
begin##Bill Wiester##imported-end##*

June 21, 2008 at 01:48 PM



“ I am truly sorry for your loss. My sons and I will miss him. Going to the Monroe House on Tuesdays is not the same anymore.##imported-begin##Sheila Botello##imported-end##

June 20, 2008 at 05:30 PM



“ Dear Janet & Bill Jr.
We both want to extend to your our deepest sympathy.
Although we had never had the pleasure of meeting your dad,we have read of all the accomplishments he had made in his life, what a wonderful person.
May God Watch Over You All,In This your time of sorrow.

Friends,
David and Pat Ledbetter##imported-begin##David & Pat Ledbetter##imported-end##

June 19, 2008 at 07:00 PM



“ We were so sorry to hear of Al's passing away. We remember him and his family when we all lived in "Victory Village" in Moses Lake. Our prayers go out to all the family.
Elizabeth Geer and family##imported-begin##Elizabeth Geer##imported-end##

June 19, 2008 at 05:19 PM



“ To the Family, Bill and Sr came to Moses Lake the same year, and of course we were all raised here. Your father was a tremendous asset to a growing community. About 700 in 1946, how time does make changes. Bill will be missed by all (except for a few criminals). Bill helped make this community safe for all of us.##imported-begin##Robert M Trask Jr & Sr##imported-end##

June 17, 2008 at 12:40 PM



“ Al and Alta were the very best neighbors here on the Twisp River Road... We loved them and know they are together again.##imported-begin##Richard Erickson/Nancy Palagruti##imported-end##

June 17, 2008 at 11:04 AM



“ Please know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers at this time in the loss of your Father, Grandfather, and FRIEND. May you take comfort in your "personal" memories experienced throughout your lives together with him.##imported-begin##Arie and Kitty VanHeusden##imported-end##

June 16, 2008 at 11:30 PM



“ Dale, Rita, and family:
We are so sorry to see Al's passing. He was a wonderful fellow, and a great police chief. He helped Moses Lake grow peacefully through a very turbulent time, and he was well respected by his community.##imported-begin##Larry & Katie Rigsby##imported-end##

June 16, 2008 at 08:54 PM