



Berkley F. Watterson

August 10, 1920 - August 31, 2017

Berkley F. Watterson, age 97, passed away in Bellingham on August 31, 2017. Berkley was born on August 10, 1920 in Brooklyn, NY to Thomas and Grace Watterson, and was the oldest of three children. His early life was spent in the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn in New York City. On July 27, 1946 Berkley married Myrlwyn Helmuth.

Berkley brought his organizational skills and his get things done approach to his career as a union organizer with labor unions and to his chosen role as a social justice activist. He and Myrlwyn raised Husky dogs for show and competition. After retiring, Berkley and Myrlwyn traveled extensively, eventually settling in Bellingham in 1990. A passionate life-long learner, Berkley enrolled in classes at Western Washington University as a fully matriculated student, where he eventually earned an honorary degree at the age of 92. Upon arriving in Bellingham, Berkley also took on a significant position as a lay-leader at Gardens Street United Methodist Church. He was a voracious reader, always organizing book clubs, even in his senior living quarters. Berkley read right up until his death.

Berkley is fondly remembered for his tenacity, faithfulness, well informed intelligence, compassion, and unique sense of humor.

He was preceded in death by Myrlwyn in 1993, by his brother Robert

Watterson, and by his sister Dorothy Watterson, age 5.

A Celebration of Berkley's Life will be held on Saturday, September 23, 11:00am at Garden Street Methodist Church, 1326 Garden St., Bellingham.

Memorials may be made to UMCOR – for United Methodist Committee on Relief mailed c/o Garden Street Methodist Church, 1326 Garden St, Bellingham, WA 98225 (www.umcor.org) or to Whatcom Hospice Foundation at www.whatcomhospice.org.

Tribute Wall

ME

“*Berkley was an inspiring life-long learner. He took full advantage of Washington State’s tuition waiver program and first started taking classes at Fairhaven College while I was the Dean in 1994 and continued to show up, quarter after quarter, until 2012, when his health began to decline. He earned enough credits for an honorary degree, and the classes he took showed the range and breadth of his interests from Race, Politics and Public Policy to Understanding Plays and Visual Dialogue. He was a joy to have in the classes, bringing his social justice perspectives and his life experience to class discussions, enriching the conversation for all students. I loved my conversations with him in Fairhaven’s halls!*”

Marie Eaton - August 31, 2017 at 12:00 AM

MO

“*I enjoyed many interesting conversations with Berkley before I retired from the Theatre department at Western Washington University. He was in some theatre classes and often visited my office. I also saw him at dog events and always enjoyed his ready wit and curiosity about the world around him. As I recall he even performed in FIDDLER ON THE ROOF. Berkley was forever young and I will miss him. I will be in Pennsylvania on the date of his memorial or I would be there.*”

Maureen O'Reilly - August 31, 2017 at 12:00 AM