



Christopher Charles Follis

December 30, 1950 - January 25, 2015

“To unpathed waters, undreamed shores...”

Christopher Charles Follis died unexpectedly on Sunday, January 25 at St. Jo’s Hospital of natural causes. He had just turned 64. He was surrounded by all his siblings, their spouses, several lifelong friends and many of his beloved nieces and nephews.

Chris was born in Bellingham on December 30, 1950 to Bill and Helen Follis. He attended Campus School, Fairhaven Junior High and graduated from Sehome High School in 1969. While at Sehome, he lettered in football and baseball. When not on the ball fields, he drove a 1959 Plymouth Savoy with the fastest windows in town ! He enjoyed bird hunting in his younger years, fishing and was an excellent golfer. In the summer of 1968 he traveled to Europe with a group of his peers on a People-to-People High School Ambassador Program trip. After six weeks, he returned with a new friend, Kelly Knight, also a Sehome grad, who would later become his wife. Chris went on to graduate from the University of Washington with a BA in Geography and Land Use Management.

Chris and Kelly were married in the summer of 1973 and started life together in Seattle with Chris beginning his professional career as a commercial real estate appraiser. When Seattle’s economy started slowing in the early 80s, he

sought a position with the Borough of Haines, Alaska as their Assessor and Lands Manager. (He promised Kelly they'd only be gone a year.) After 18 months in Haines, he accepted the position of Assistant Assessor for the City and Borough of Juneau. He was later promoted to CBJ Assessor. He was soon coaxed away by the State of Alaska where he became the Assistant State Assessor. He served under three Governors. In summers, he was fortunate to travel all over the state visiting small villages and municipalities to aid them with ad valorem taxing and revenue sharing issues. During the winters, he dealt with Legislative matters. He also sat on the State's Oil and Gas Assessment Review Board for many years.

Chris always had at least one boat, even in college. For several summers, Chris and Kelly operated Discovery Charters, a bare boat charter business, aboard the "Sounder," formerly the "Puget Sounder" of Bellingham, a 32 foot trawler. (Lots of stories there !) They are the first and only married couple to have co-chaired the Annual Golden North Salmon Derby and Chris went through the chairs of the Juneau Yacht Club, eventually becoming Commodore.

After deciding to leave State service, Chris drove coach for several seasons for Princess Cruises (always tip the driver !) and (his favorite job of all) worked part time for Alaska Airlines operating the forklift in the freight warehouse and loading 737s.

In 2002, Chris and Kelly left Alaska and retired to beautiful Sandy Point where they became very involved in their new community. Chris was the chief hot dog chef for the Sandy Point Events Committee and the Sandy Point Yacht Club, among other volunteer activities. They enjoyed Palm Springs in the fall, cruising in the winter, and their beautiful beach the rest of the year. Chris especially loved tending his vegetable garden, cutting his dahlias for Kelly and studying all the local critters.

Chris is survived by his wife, Kelly, siblings and spouses Tom and Karen Follis, Melanie O'Suilleabhain, Millie and Gary Tetrick, Starck and Pam Follis, all of Bellingham, and many nieces and nephews. His mother, Helen, also survives him. There will be a Send Off Celebration at the Squalicum Boathouse from 2:00pm until 4:00pm Friday, February 6. In lieu of flowers, he would have appreciated contributions to the Sandy Point Fire Fighters Association, 4332 Sucia Drive, Ferndale 98248, to further fund the volunteers' emergency training and/or your adoption of a new friend from the Whatcom Humane Society in honor of Chris and Kelly's cherished rescue cats, Muffin and Pearl.

Chris's ashes will be scattered on their wild and beloved beach and cabin site on Shelter Island, northwest of Juneau, this summer.

Tribute Wall

NZ

“ We are thinking of you Kelly. So shocked to hear he has passed at such a young age. If you would ever like to chat just call. Mom would love to see you sometime.
Her mind is going so it would be nice. Take care of yourself. Love from Vi and Nancy.

Nancy and Vi Zurline - January 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ Chris Follis died last week. This is slowly sinking in. Our fathers were great friends, yet I never really “knew” Chris. Yet all of my life he was somewhat of an icon to me. I remember his prowess as an athlete and his successes in so many ways. His love of life. Yet I could not—could never—compete on the the same playing field. So I chose another path. Yet the notion of being as successful or as complete as Chris Follis was never far from my mind. I found a path that suited me. He obviously found a path that suited him. We shared a birthday. We also shared a sense of what we should be in the world, I believe Chris inspired me to be the very best person I could be. I wish I had really known him, not just because of the positive influence he had on my life (even the envy). In a way, he is like all of the Follis’s: There is ALWAYS more than meets the eye. Never underestimate the power of this wonderful family. And the gift they are to the people they touch, directly and indirectly.

Mark Asmundson - January 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM