



Duane P. Sammons

December 30, 1936 - July 30, 2018

Duane Sammons, age 81, died peacefully in his sleep on July 30, 2018. Born in Omaha, Nebraska on December 30, 1936, he and his family moved to Seattle when he was a small child. He spent most of his life in Whatcom County as a professional musician, karate master, business owner, and civic leader.

He had a musical career spanning six decades. He started playing the drums in junior high, continued through high school, and, in 1959, began drumming professionally in Seattle with the Larry Duran Trio and later with the Gary Dahl Trio through the late 1960s. When he moved to Bellingham, he became a member of Ken Colvin's bands and The Skippers. In 1983, he joined the Bathtub Gin Party Band, which participated in jazz festivals across the Northwest and California, and toured in Japan. They even appeared in an episode of the TV show Northern Exposure.

He started his karate career in Seattle with the YMCA and, by 1968, he had attained his black belt in Goju Ryu karate. He opened his own dojo when he moved to Bellingham and, in 1972, he bought the church building on the corner of High and Maple Streets, where he opened the Bellingham Academy of Self Defense. He was the head instructor there until 2010 when he retired. In 2002, he was awarded his 7th degree black belt. He also had black belts in laido, Kendo, and Jujitsu.

He graduated from the University of Washington in 1960 and was honorably discharged from the Washington National Guard in 1962. Then he began his lifelong career in the insurance business.

He started as a claims adjuster for CNA, then became a Safeco Insurance representative in the late 1960s. He joined Daw and Daw Insurance when he moved to Bellingham as an independent insurance agent and, in 1978, he opened his own business, Whatcom Insurance Center, buying Blaine Insurance the following year.

Community service was a big part of his life. He joined the Bellingham Junior Chamber of Commerce, was a Blossom Time Grand Parade Chairman, a D.A.R.E. Association chairman, and served as Blaine Chamber of Commerce President for many terms. In 1976, he was a participant in the Bicentennial Wagon Train sendoff. He became chairman of D.A.R.E. Association in 1977. In 1981, he served as the Bellingham Chamber of Commerce president. One of his favorite assignments was as Chairman of the Ski to Sea Race (1979-1993). The Westside Record-Journal named him "Man of the Year" in 1990.

He is survived by, Ann, his wife of 37 years and his sister, Carol. He has two daughters Taylor Lynnde Sammons and Stacey Peter from a previous marriage. He has a step-son Geoffrey. He has five grandchildren, Aubrey Kornelis, Kamron Sammons, Brad Philpott, Evan Philpott, and Donovan Peter. He has one grandson-in-law Jon Kornelis and great granddaughter Izabella Kornelis. A son, Mark and two sisters Marilyn and Janet, predeceased him.

There will be a Celebration of Life at the Bellingham Elks Club #194, 710 Samish Way, on August 19 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Donations to the Alzheimer's Society of Washington, 1301 Fraser St.,

Bellingham, WA 98229 would be appreciated.

Tribute Wall

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“ consider focusing on the relationship itself—on your own or with a therapist who can help you to address the ways in which you communicate and support one another.”

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