



## Eugene Cecil "Gene" Olney Jr

September 20, 1927 - January 28, 2024

Eugene Cecil "Gene" Olney Jr., passed away peacefully surrounded by his loving family on January 28, 2024, at his home in Deming, Washington. He was born on September 20, 1927 in Seattle, Washington to Eugene and Mildred Henry Olney. Gene grew up in Bellingham, attended Bellingham High School, and was a military veteran, serving his country in both the Merchant Marines and the US Army.

Gene was a wise, humble, and caring man whose 96 years of life touched the hearts of many. With his warm smile and kind heart, he was always willing to help those in need. He worked as an auto mechanic throughout his professional career and was a respected member of the International Garage Owners Association. Additionally, he spent many summers in Bristol Bay, Alaska as Port Engineer for the Peter Pan salmon cannery, where he worked around-the-clock to keep their fleet of aging cannery boats operational and fishing.

Gene was passionate about health and amassed a vast collection of dog-eared newsletters and books on health-related topics. His extensive studies led him to avoid dubious dietary fads and pharmaceuticals that adversely impact the lives of so many. Remarkably, even in his advanced years, Gene remained admirably independent and never did wear eyeglasses or hearing aids.

When he wasn't working, Gene found solace and peace in nature. An avid fly fisherman, he delighted in fishing and camping trips with friends and family. Whether casting his line in the pristine streams of the Pacific Northwest or hiking through lush forests, he cherished every moment spent outdoors. Gene's deep connection to nature was evident through his regular donations to The Nature Conservancy, and in the hundreds of rare glass fishing floats he collected over years walking remote Alaskan beaches.

Gene's caregiving skills were truly extraordinary. He dedicated himself to lovingly tending to the needs of his mother Millie, his wife Peggy, and anyone else who required a helping hand. He treated his stepchildren as his own and imparted his wisdom and guidance, leaving an indelible impact on their lives. His family will forever treasure memories of camping trips, weekly Wednesday dinners, and countless other special moments shared together.

He was preceded in death by his sons Michael and David, grandson Jeffrey, and his beloved wife of over 50 years, Peggy. Gene is survived by his granddaughter Janell, grandsons Brandon and Michael Jr., stepchildren Randy Hartnell (Carla), Alinda Ruhle, Terry Hartnell (Laura), Shari Larsen (Mike), and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A celebration of Gene's life will be held at 2pm, Sunday, March 10th, at the Deming Logging Show Museum, a place where he and Peggy loved spending time supporting annual barbecue fundraisers.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made to Whatcom Hospice and/or The Nature Conservancy in honor of Gene.

Gene's warm presence and kind spirit will be deeply missed by all who had the honor of knowing him. May his memory serve as a source of comfort and

inspiration for years to come.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Jodi Christensen lit a candle in memory of Eugene "Gene" Olney*



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**Jodi Christensen** - February 26 at 11:33 AM



“ *Gene lived a good long life! It always brought a smile to my face when he walked into Hardware Sales! I knew him for many years before!*

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**Laurie Clumpner** - February 08, 2024 at 12:00 AM