



Gene Mulder

August 3, 1931 - October 2, 2015

Samuel Eugene Mulder (Gene) of Ferndale, Washington, was surrounded by family and close friends as he passed away on October 2, 2015, under care of hospice at Hospice House, Bellingham. When he learned two days before his death that cancer had returned and the treatment was no longer working, after consulting with his children Mike and Janet he approached his final hours with dignity, humor and even relief as he anticipated the end to his suffering, being with the Lord and seeing his family and friends who preceded him in death.

Gene was the first of six children born to Sam and Elizabeth Mulder, on August 3, 1931, in Racine, Wisconsin. Early in his childhood his father packed up Elizabeth and the six kids in their car with all their belongings and headed for Florida in search of better opportunities. A few years later, after getting wind of employment out west, the family would eventually settle on Casino road in Everett, Washington. Gene became part of Beverly Park Church where at sixteen years of age he made a life-changing decision to follow Christ. Gene was known as a leader throughout his life, and remained committed as devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, neighbor, church elder, friend and fair-dealing businessman. His enduring legacy to this world will be his unwavering faith in Christ, his steadfast commitment to his family and church, and both his shrewdness and his fairness in all business dealings.

After finishing a grade eight education, Gene worked a number of jobs to help support his family. He later worked in forest-related jobs until he landed employment at Scott Paper company, where he was noted for both his work ethic and his aptitude for mathematics. On November 18, 1950, Gene married Mildred Louise Miers (Millie), and settled into their home on 1314 Casino Road. Soon thereafter he was drafted for a period of two years into the army and shipped overseas to serve in the Korean War as heavy equipment operator. In short order Gene's leadership skills and natural authority promoted him up the ranks to sergeant, where he got the taste of being in charge of men much older and experienced than himself.

Back home after serving his term, Gene went back to night school, taking a bookkeeping course that he would later credit with equipping him for a life in business. Over a period of years Gene moved from log scaler to log buyer for Scott Paper, a tactical shift that would ultimately prepare him for an enormous advancement when a Vancouver-based firm, Cattermole-Trethewey Contracting came knocking on Scott Paper's door in search of promising talent to lead their timber selling division. Gene's mentor and boss at Scott Paper, George Smith, advised Gene to consider moving his family north and after prayerful consideration Gene and Millie and Mike and Janet moved to Tsawwassen, British Columbia, a bedroom community within a thirty minute commute to Vancouver.

Gene was thirty-two years old when he came to Cattermole-Trethewey where he was thrust into a situation of being boss to many people, most of whom were older than himself. After a good run of years, Cattermole-Trethewey underwent a re-structuring which resulted in Gene forming his own timber trading company and working from his house in Tsawwassen. Soon thereafter Gene was joined by Ken Hancock, who with his banking background assisted Gene in trading timber with Japanese clients and others, loading log ships and scouting rafts of logs up and down the B.C. coast. All in all, Gene made 31

trips to Japan, many of which were accompanied by Millie and spoken of with great fondness for years to come, particularly with regards to the hospitality and respect of the Japanese people.

All of this time Gene remained committed to his local church, which in Tsawwassen was South Delta Baptist, where he and Millie formed lifelong friendships with other young couples who were also raising children at the time.

The spotted owl issue virtually took down the timber industry in British Columbia, and so by the late seventies Gene and Millie once again ventured south over the border, this time settling in the county outside of Ferndale, Washington, on a 40 acre piece of land that became Gene and Millie's sanctuary until now. Millie found a gorgeous piece of land that had an old farmhouse on it, which the couple remodeled into the home that stands today. They joined Sunrise Baptist Church on Badger Road, where they made many friends. Gene's activities on behalf of the church were broad and diverse. He and Millie were youth sponsors; Gene often taught Sunday School; when new couples would come to church for the first time, it was not uncommon for Gene and Millie to invite them out for lunch after the service. Gene's love for the people of the church was deep and lasting – up until the time of his death of his death he referred to many of the young people as his kids. Gene deemed it an honor to be considered as a mentor to the young men who were coming up as leaders. The backbone of Gene and Millie's church life, as Gene would say, was the home Bible studies they conducted in their house for over two decades. It was here they saw firsthand the profound impact of the teachings of Christ on the lives of a cross-section of people, not to leave out the great recipes that Millie picked up from the many new friends she and Gene met at those weekly gatherings.

Not to be overlooked was Gene's notion of stewardship. A charitable giver his entire life, he would nevertheless credit Millie with ensuring that ten percent of his paycheck would make it into the offering plate at his church. Gene would later note that his faithfulness in this area was on more than one occasion followed by a raise in his salary.

Although active in business right up to the end, Gene never lost his love of nature. His 40 acre farm had ample walking trails and various types of vegetation to keep him interested, and when that needed mixing up Gene would love to take a mere three-hour jaunt over the mountains to Winthrop or elsewhere – following the road wherever it would lead him. To celebrate one birthday, Mike drove Gene east over the mountains and then north to Osoyoos, B.C. only to stop for supper and immediately return – an eighteen hour excursion. On his eightieth birthday, Virgil and Cheetah Stremler loaded up their horse trailers with food and pack horses and together with hikers – eighteen in all, riders and hikers combined – the crew ventured over Rainy Pass and into Steheken on the shores of Lake Chelan. It was a spectacular three-day jaunt that left Gene and Virgil dreaming of future adventures of the same kind.

Gene's love of family is obvious by the many relatives who lovingly refer to him as "Uncle Gene." He loved nothing more than to be surrounded by his children, grand and great-grand-children, siblings and nephews and nieces. He loved his family gatherings at the farm or beach cabin, anywhere, just so family was together for a while.

Those who remain to cherish Gene's memory are his wife of sixty-five years, Millie; two children, Mike (Deanna) Mulder of Custer, Janet (Mario) Ramirez of Lynden; Faye Mulder, mother of his three grand-daughters; four grandchildren, Jacob (Molly) Mulder of Lynden, Tessa (Jesse) Penner of Langley B.C., Bailey (Johnny) Forward of Langley B.C., and Michaela Mulder

of Langley, B.C.; three great-grandchildren, twins Emerson and Davie Forward, and Paige Penner; three sisters, Helen Bergstrom, Shirley Morehouse and Betty Struve.

Gene was preceded in death by his parents; his brother Jim Mulder and his sister Joanne Sahlin.

A graveside service will be held on Friday October 16, 3:00pm at Enterprise Cemetery in Ferndale. A Celebration of Gene's Life will take place on Saturday October 17, 2:00pm at Semiahmoo Resort, 9565 Semiahmoo Pkwy, Blaine.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Burn Children Recovery Foundation or New Vision Soccer.

Tribute Wall

RH

“ Gene & Millie were true soldiers of the Lord. Their lives were truly led by the Holy Spirit and they leave a legacy of influence on many, many people’s lives. Ron was very proud to state openly that he was “one of Gene’s kids”. Nancy will never forget how they were there for her in a terrible situation. We will miss him terribly in our lives here...but what a blessing to know that we will see him again.

Ron & Nancy Haugness - October 02, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RH

“ What a lovely Obituary regarding the life of Gene. I will always remember how he made me & my family so at ease at the marriage of my brother Mario, to his daughter Janet (the very first time I met him & Millie), and many times after that. He was a kind man with a wonderful smile & laugh. May the Angels surround you dear Sir on your Journey to be with our Maker. My sincere sympathy to the Mulder Family.

Rose F. Hernandez - October 02, 2015 at 12:00 AM